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JOSEPH DITZLER/Stars and Stripes

A warning sign marks the edge of a suspected minefield in the countryside north of Siem Reap, Cambodia, on Nov. 6.

African rats helping clear Cambodian minefields

By JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

SIEM REAP, Cambodia — An hour's drive north on Route 66, beyond the tourist gaggle at the temple complex around Angkor Wat, work goes on to clear away the vestiges of three decades of war.

The key workers — African giant pouch rats — keep their noses on the job. This year in Cambodia, the rats and their human handlers have cleared hundreds of acres of land mines and unexploded munitions, making way for local farmers.

In early November, the teams were finishing up 70 acres just off the highway and past a two-room, wooden Cambodian farmhouse on stilts, over a muddy pasture and through a grove of cashew trees.

"From the time we started working, we've already cleared 13.25 hectares," or 33 acres, said Mark Shukuru, senior technical

SEE CLEAR ON PAGE 5

Failed drug war

Confidential documents indicate nearly all US efforts at ending opium farming in Afghanistan backfired

By CRAIG WHITLOCK
The Washington Post

In late 2017, U.S. military commanders in Afghanistan launched Operation Iron Tempest, a storm of airstrikes by B-52 bombers, F-22 Raptors and other warplanes. The main target: a network of clandestine opium production labs that U.S. officials said was helping to generate \$200 million per year in drug money for the Taliban.

"This is a new war, and the gloves are off," Air Force Brig. Gen. Lance Bunch said during a swaggering news conference in Kabul. "That is our new strategy going forward, and it's definitely been a game-changer and the Taliban is definitely feeling it. ... The war has changed."

Within a year, Operation Iron Tempest had fizzled out.

SEE BACKFIRED ON PAGE 6

Two Afghan children assisting their elders working in a poppy field observe patrolling Marines in 2014.

DUSTIN D. MARCH/U.S. Marine Corps



BUSINESS/WEATHER

Spending bill includes funding for wild horse program

The Washington Post

The Bureau of Land Management's wild horse and burro program got a significant funding boost in the \$1.4 trillion budget deal approved Thursday by Congress. But to access the money, the agency first needs to produce an "aggressive, nonlethal" strategy to manage a swelling mustang population roaming public lands in the West.

The spending bill increases the program's budget by \$21 million, or about 25%. It would be made

available 60 days after the bureau submits a five-year plan that, among other things, includes horse fertility control and the movement of equines to private pastures.

The increase amounts to an endorsement of a controversial proposal on the management of wild horses published earlier this year by an unusual alliance of animal welfare organizations and ranching advocates. Typically at odds, the groups said they decided to work together in hopes of breaking a stalemate in Washington.

But their plan, which called for

rounding up as many as 130,000 wild horses over a decade, was assailed by several horse advocacy groups that portrayed it as a gift to the cattle industry, which grazes livestock on public lands where horses and burros also feed.

Horse advocates call the round-ups cruel and blame millions of cattle for damaging the land while grazing. Ranchers and some environmentalists view the horses as feral pests that damage ecosystems and compete for resources with livestock and wildlife.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Dec. 23)	1.1387
Dollar buys (Dec. 23)	0.8782
British pound (Dec. 23)	0.7134
Japanese yen (Dec. 23)	107.00
South Korean won (Dec. 23)	1,135.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound \$	1.3015
Canada (Dollar)	1.3158
China (Yuan)	7.0667
Denmark (Krone)	6.7450
Egypt (Pound)	16.0489
Euro	\$1.1075/0.9029
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7963
Hungary (Forint)	296.24
Israel (Shekel)	3.4752
Japan (Yen)	109.47
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3037
Norway (Krone)	8.9672
Philippines (Peso)	50.75
Poland (Zloty)	3.84
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7516
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3552
South Korea (Won)	1,159.90
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9825
Thailand (Baht)	30.18
Turkey (Lira)	4.9349

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlethal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.75
Discount rate	2.25
Federal funds market rate	1.55
3-month bill	1.53
30-year bond	2.34

WEATHER OUTLOOK

MONDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



MONDAY IN EUROPE



TUESDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

TODAY

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MILITARY

Study: Army suicide rise not linked to combat

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

Suicide rates among active-duty U.S. soldiers significantly increased during America's lengthy wars in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, reversing an earlier historical trend in which rates dropped during wartime, a study found.

The study published Dec. 13 in JAMA Network Open suggests the uptick in active-duty Army suicide rates over the past two decades might not be associated with combat, as has been often assumed.

"There appears to be a paradigm shift that happens with the so-called 'endless wars' — Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan," said

Jeffrey Smith, a history professor at the University of Hawaii-Hilo and a co-author of the study.

"From a historical standpoint, rates did not increase during wartime, which is part of why we're starting to try to look at these increases from a multifactorial perspective," he said Thursday. "There's probably other factors at play in these increases in rates beyond a singular fixation on combat exposure as the primary driver of what's going on."

Researchers from the University of Hawaii and the Defense Department examined records dating to 1819, the first such in-depth look at military suicide rates. The Army was chosen to review because it is the nation's

largest service branch.

Researchers found distinct periods of lower and higher suicide rates, a finding that suggests active-duty suicide rates are not necessarily linked to wartime combat.

Beginning in 1843, suicide rates among soldiers began to increase, with a peak of 118.3 suicides per 100,000 individuals in 1883.

From there, rates decreased through the Spanish-American War in 1898, World War I in 1914-18 and World War II in 1941-45. By the last year of World War II, the rate had dropped to 5 per 100,000 soldiers.

Beginning around 2004 — a few years after the U.S. sent forces to Afghanistan and Iraq — suicide

rates among soldiers began rising dramatically. It peaked at 29.7 per 100,000 in 2012 and has not fallen below 20.2 for the past 11 years, according to the study.

Smith said his current research is examining suicide more broadly over time to "parse out" causes "indicative of a particular time and place" for society overall.

"We're looking at causal factors that would be beyond the battlefield," he said. "We're looking at socio-economic factors, psychological factors, those type avenues."

A big jump in the suicide rate in the late 1800s came at a time of no major wars and then declined without the military implementing a suicide-prevention program,

which "seems to speak to larger factors at play," Smith said.

The findings dovetail with several recent studies that found deployment does not increase the risk of suicide for active-duty personnel. The Defense Department's annual report on suicide released in September described it as a "misconception" to link deployment — including combat experience, length of deployment, and number of deployments — with greater risk of suicide.

It noted, for example, that of the active-duty service members who died by suicide in 2017, 41.7% had no history of deployment.

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Military has no policy on troop's use of TikTok

By IMMANUEL JOHNSON
Stars and Stripes

TikTok user @Shreddedphoto's dance with a banana to the sounds of "This Is How We Do It" garnered some attention last month on the video-sharing app, but it was a six-second clip of him flexing his bulging biceps that went viral.

"You are so into yourself," says a woman he hadn't noticed entering the room, and @Shreddedphoto — also known as Marine Sgt. David Bickel — flashes an embarrassed grin that has earned him 1.6 million views.

The clips show a lighter side of the Marine Corps on an app that has grown in popularity with young people who might someday think about signing up. But TikTok's Chinese ownership has some lawmakers and military officials concerned that it could be used to gather intelligence on Americans.

"I don't post anything other than in common locations and screen the video before it gets posted," Bickel, who also turns off location services and doesn't record directly through the TikTok app.

The military generally tells its personnel not to disclose sensitive information on social networks and to avoid installing apps that might compromise personal or sensitive data. But there is no uniform policy on TikTok.

"Tik Tok is a cybersecurity threat," the Navy Marine Corps Intranet stated Wednesday in a user bulletin, adding that anyone with the app on their mobile devices wouldn't be allowed to use the intranet.

"This decision was made based on cybersecurity threat assessments, and is consistent with 10th Fleet efforts to proactively



SCREENSHOT/TikTok

Lawmakers have expressed concern over the Chinese-owned app TikTok and the potential national security risk it can pose. However, service members continue to use it with no specified guidance.

address existing and emerging threats in defense of our networks," Cmdr. Dave Benham, 10th Fleet and U.S. Fleet Cyber Command spokesman, said in a statement.

Last month, the U.S. Army Cadet Command directed its units not to use TikTok for official purposes. That came after Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., expressed concerns about soldiers using China-owned social media platforms "in both their personal and official capacities."

In a letter to Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy, Schumer said that national security experts have raised concerns about TikTok's collection of user data "in light of laws that compel Chinese companies to support and cooperate with intelligence work controlled by the Chinese Communist Party."

TikTok said it has a "deep commitment to user privacy" in an emailed statement.

"TikTok US content and moderation policies are led by our U.S.-based team and are not influenced by any foreign government, including China," TikTok spokesman Josh Gartner said.

The U.S. has accused China for several years of state-sponsored hacking of government and com-

mmercial networks. In 2015, the FBI blamed the breach of more than 21 million records from the Office of Personnel Management on Chinese hackers.

TikTok is growing in popularity because the videos are short and easy to view, Marine Sgt. Courtney White said.

"Some of the hashtags you use can have millions of different videos so you would not see the same video," she said. "It's genuinely fun and easy to use."

Service members who spoke with Stars and Stripes said they're generally aware of operational security and risks associated with social media. However, those platforms are where young adults and prospective service members can be reached.

"As long as we are abiding by the standards set forth, apps like TikTok can actually help the recruiting mission and public support," Bickel said in a chat message. "When we have normal Marines engaging with the public on a personal level (TikTok, personal Instagram accounts and YouTube) it allows what we do to seem more achievable."

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NDAA makes maintaining career easier for spouses

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Frequent military moves for Navy spouse Andrea Krull involves not only the challenges of uprooting her life but also maintaining her business as a public relations consultant. With each move to a new state, she would have to reestablish her residence and reregister her health insurance, costing time and money.

"Every time you move, not only does every state have different rules about registering your (limited liability) corporation, but every county and city also has different rules," Krull said. "And so every time we move, I'm putting everything on hold for the actual physical move ... And then I'm needing to go in and make sure that I'm addressing all of the correct administrative things I need to do to get reestablished in every state."

The 2020 National Defense Authorization Act includes a provision to amend the Service members Civil Relief Act to allow military spouses to use the same state of residence as their service member for any reason to include for the purposes of registering a business.

The legislation also included the transfer of professional licenses for spouses when they move.

For spouses who have professional licenses for their jobs, multiple moves to different states forces them to recertify and pay fees for new licenses with each move.

More than 34% of military spouses need a state license to work in their field, such as teachers or nurses, according to the office of Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H. The NDAA authorized the Defense Department to work with states on developing agreements on state licensing standards to help with the transfer of licenses for spouses when they move.

There is a separate section

in the NDAA that increases the amount spouses can be reimbursed by the military for relocating from \$500 to \$1,000.

At one time, spouses would have to change their state of residence each time they moved while service members could retain their residence regardless of where the military moved them. The 2009 Military Spouse Residency Relief Act allowed spouses to take on the same state residency as their service member for tax and voting purposes.

However, it does not cover the registration of the spouse's business in that state.

Because Krull has to register her small business in the state where she physically resides — currently Virginia — and the state requires that she also be a resident, Krull has to reestablish her residence and business with each move, adding more time and costs per move for her to maintain her career.

She worked with staffers for Shaheen, her husband's senator, on legislation to help other spouses with legal difficulties maintaining residency and small businesses while moving with the military. Krull has had to reregister her business three times.

"Military spouses have challenges enough because they are often the ones who have to move the families, make the arrangements, and then many of them work at the same time. And to have that additional burden didn't seem fair to me," Shaheen said.

Krull will be able to keep her residence and business registered in one state, regardless of where her family moves to next.

"I'm really excited for all of the military spouses who are trying so hard to maintain their professional career. But this is one less thing they need to worry about," Krull said.

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MILITARY

Ramstein airmen prepare for dining facility closure

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — The 1950s-era base dining facility that serves some 1,300 airmen here will close next month for up to two years to undergo major upgrades, base officials said last week.

During the closure, most airmen who live in the dorms on Ramstein will have to find somewhere else to have their meals. On the plus side, they'll receive more than \$700 a month to compensate for the loss of access to the Rheinland Dining Facility, which for many is the cheapest and most convenient dining option.

The doors to the Rheinland Dining Facility are slated to shut on Jan. 15, said Lt. Col. Brandi Rountree, commander of the 786th Force Support Squadron.

"This is going to be a large lifestyle change for the airmen that utilize this dining facility," she said.

The only full-service dining facility on base, the Rheinland DFAC is located near most of the dormitories. It serves three meals a day, seven days a week, and of-

fers a main line with hot food, a snack line and sandwich bar, a salad bar, soup and takeout.

It and the dining facility at RAF Lakenheath in England are the busiest on Air Force bases in Europe. The Ramstein venue serves between 252,000 and 260,000 customers annually, or about 700 meals a day, said Master Sgt. Daniel White-

'This is going to be a large lifestyle change for the airmen that utilize this dining facility.'

Lt. Col. Brandi Rountree
786th Force Support Squadron

man. About \$7.2 million in renovation and structural work is planned. The dining facility will be replaced, as will grills and hood-and-duct systems.

The serving area will be expanded and the salad bar revamped, Whiteman said.



JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

Airmen wait for a hot meal at the Rheinland Dining Facility at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on Dec. 17. The dining facility will close for up to two years starting in mid-January for major renovation.

"For USAFE, this is the No. 1 priority building" for renovations, he said. "It's a long time overdue."

Town halls were held at Ramstein to inform airmen of the closure and present them with options on where to get inexpensive, healthy meals. Officials also advised them to budget their food allowance wisely.

Most airmen who live in base dormitories, where kitchen space can be limited, are enrolled in the meal card program. They receive a basic allowance for subsistence,

most of which is automatically deducted from their paychecks when they eat at the dining facility, officials said.

After the dining hall closes, airmen who live on Ramstein will see their BAS entitlement increase to \$738.78 monthly, which is twice the standard rate. Meals won't be deducted from that total, and airmen will also receive a higher cost of living allowance — about \$4 to \$5 extra per day, depending on rank.

Those who live on Kapaun, which also has a dining facil-

ity, will qualify for standard BAS (about \$369 per month) if they work on Ramstein.

To make the closure of the Rheinland facility easier, base officials plan to offer more cooking classes in the dorms and equip some dorm rooms with mini refrigerators.

Other dining establishments on base may extend their hours or services, officials said.

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Integration has been seamless for girls in Okinawa Scouts

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

CAMP COURTNEY, Okinawa — In years past the leader who called Scouts BSA Troop 110 to order Wednesday on Camp Courtney may have elicited surprise, even disapproval, from some old-school Boy Scouts.

"It's very important that you are accountable for your responsibilities," said assistant senior patrol leader Melanie Alejandra Varon Golden, addressing the group about the possibility of becoming leaders themselves. "You have to be willing to put in 100% effort because other Scouts rely on you."

The 17-year-old Star Scout — Scouting's third highest rank — joined the 109-year-old civic organization for 11- to 17-year-olds in March, one month after the Scouts opened their ranks to girls.

Varon Golden and her male and female counterparts said integration had not only been seamless but highly successful on Okinawa, improving Troop 110 and pushing Scouts of both genders to greater heights.

"Coming in, I was a bit nervous," Varon Golden said after the meeting. "Even though society has these things that are more so for men, I think it's been a great opportunity that we are able to be a part of Scouts BSA and are treated equally."

Troop 110 is one of eight on the Japanese island of Okinawa, according to the Boy Scouts of America Far East Council website. Troops are spread across Japan and



CARLOS VAZQUEZ/Stars and Stripes

Members of the Scouts BSA Troop 110 huddle after a meeting at Camp Courtney, Okinawa, on Wednesday.

Korea. Troop 110 is about 30 years old, said assistant Scoutmaster Ryan Gutzwiller. Since adding girls in February, it now operates as

two separate gender-specific troops under the same umbrella. The Scouts decide what they want to do together or separately, and those events

just sort of happen organically, the troop's Scoutmasters said. Many activities, like meetings, hikes and certain camping trips, are done jointly.

Four girls joined in February, Gutzwiller said. That number has grown to 10. The girls are thus far so motivated to achieve that they have spurred their male counterparts to keep up, he said.

No issues have arisen due to having both genders in the troop, Scoutmasters said.

Scout Chett Huff, 15, said he knows the girls from school, so welcoming them into the fold was easy. Huff is a Life Scout, Scouting's second-highest rank.

"They bring a lot to the table," he said. Assistant Scoutmaster Jeff Planteen, who achieved Scouting's top rank of Eagle Scout, has been overjoyed watching his daughter, Kaelin, 11, carry on enthusiastically in his footsteps, he said. She took part in a wilderness survival campout and scaled 12,389-foot-high Mount Fuji.

"I've definitely seen confidence, her ability to speak up and say, 'Hey, I know how to do that,' or 'I can show you how to do that,' which is something I don't think she really had before," Planteen said. "She's having a blast."

"The people here are awesome, and they've been welcoming," said the soft-spoken Kaelin Planteen. "We go on really fun adventures."

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MILITARY

Clear: Rats alert handlers to chemical explosives

FROM FRONT PAGE

adviser for APOPO, a nongovernmental agency that trains rats to sniff out mines. "Up till now we've pulled 14 mines" and have found nine unexploded ordnances.

APOPO — one of several organizations clearing mines under the auspices of the Cambodian Mine Action Center — expected to finish that site by Nov. 29 and move on to another. The cleared acreage will be handed off in a ceremony Dec. 29 to local Cambodians, said Michael Heiman, APOPO program manager in Cambodia, in an email Nov. 27.

APOPO is a Dutch acronym for Anti-Personnel Landmines Detection Product Development.

"They are planning to grow mangoes, cashew nuts and rice on the land cleared," he wrote.

Minifields and other leftover munitions are a diminishing threat in Cambodia, thanks to the Cambodians themselves, nongovernmental agencies and foreign governments — Japan and the United States included. Today, far more Cambodians die in traffic accidents than are killed by land mines.

But they're still a threat.

From 1979 to 2017, leftover munitions in Cambodia killed nearly 20,000 people and injured an additional 45,000, about half of them children. A 2013 survey found more than 700 square miles of Cambodia was still contaminated by land mines, according to Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the U.S. — one of several combatants at the time — dropped about 2.7 million tons of ordnance there. Some of it still litters the countryside. Since then, the U.S. has given more than \$114 million to clear mines in Cambodia, according to the State Department.

For example, the Marine Corps this summer sent emergency ordnance disposal technicians to train their Cambodian counterparts as part of an ongoing Defense Department program, said 2nd Lt. Danny Little, spokesman for Marine Corps Forces Pacific, in an email Nov. 28.

'A survival thing'

Founded in Belgium in 1997, APOPO is unique in developing rats as minesweepers, Heiman said.

The rats are very efficient, he said. They alert handlers to the chemical explosives, not the metallic parts that trigger electromagnetic mine detectors. The rats, over three years, increased APOPO mine-clearing efficiency by about 25%, according to the organization's 2018 annual report.

Overall, APOPO this year cleared 509 acres in Cambodia, finding and destroying over 600 mines and other unexploded leftovers of war, Heiman wrote.

Although the Cambodian economy grew by an average 8% from 1998 to 2018, its rural population

'At the end of the week, we give them a big bunch of food. The seventh day is a holiday. We're giving them watermelons, sweet potatoes, corn, carrots to enjoy their weekend.'

Mark Shukuru
senior technical adviser for APOPO

is still mostly poor or just out of poverty, according to the World Bank.

Shukuru, a Tanzanian, has cleared minifields in Angola and Mozambique. He said he sees in Cambodia something he's not seen elsewhere: Locals deliberately working in minifields.

That's not uncommon in some mine-riddled, developing countries, Heiman said.

"Sometimes it's a survival thing so they take the risk," he wrote. "We provide Mine Risk Education in the mine-affected villages, but we cannot put guards around the mine-affected areas."

Cambodia was a battleground from the mid-1960s to the early 1990s.

The U.S. and South Vietnam battled North Vietnam there during the Vietnam War. The reunited Vietnamese fought the U.S.-backed Cambodians. The insurgent, communist Khmer Rouge fought the government under Lon Nol. The Vietnamese fought the Khmer Rouge. The United Nations brokered a sketchy peace in 1991.

Antipersonnel and antitank mines, unexploded cluster munitions, artillery rounds, grenades, mortars and aerial bombs still litter the countryside.

The site being cleared by APOPO in November had been a fortified camp. The minifield showed no pattern. Water sources and obvious cover, such as large trees, were ringed by mines. A site map indicated a lane cleared by the Khmer Rouge to move armored vehicles, where powerful antitank mines might lie.

The rat advantage

Rats make good mine detectors for several reasons, said Theoun Theap, the APOPO operations manager in Siem Reap.

They're too small to step off the mines. Their food — apples, bananas, tomatoes, peanuts — is available in local markets. APOPO also uses canines to hunt mines, but dog food can be expensive and harder to procure.

An APOPO vehicle can carry only one or two dogs but several rats, plus training the rats takes eight months to a year versus



PHOTOS BY JOSEPH DITZLER/Stars and Stripes

Above: An African pouch rat makes its way across a suspected minifield in Cambodia on Nov. 6. Below: A rat sniffs for land mines in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

a full year for a dog. And any trained handler can work with any rat; the dogs are paired with specific handlers.

"Normally, in captivity their life span is eight years and it takes us one year to train a rat, so that means we have at least five to six years to use them in operations," Shukuru said. "When they reach the age of six years, from there most of them are retired."

The nonprofit relies on international public support; U.S. donors gave \$1.9 million from 2015-17, according to tax filings. To raise money, APOPO advertises an "adopt-a-rat" program on social media.

The animals are captured wild in Tanzania and bred. The next generation is trained to detect mines. The training success rate is about 93%, Shukuru said.

In the field, the rats work from 6-9:30 a.m., when they're most alert and before the Cambodian day becomes too hot.

On a typical day, teams of rats and handlers must clear about 3,300 square feet, working pre-marked rectangles of about 1,100 square feet. Each rat works with two handlers per section. Once a rat becomes fatigued, another waiting nearby takes its place.

"They have to work, all of them," Shukuru said. "Every rat that comes in the day has to



work."

The basic procedure is simple. The handlers stand on either side of the rectangle and the rat moves on a cord back and forth between them, sniffing as it goes. When the rat reaches one side, the handlers take a step sideways and the rat returns to the other side.

If the rat alerts, the handlers mark the spot and move on. A demining team comes by later to remove the land mine if they find one. Random plots are rechecked to guarantee they're mine-free.

The hardworking rats earn a regular bonus. "At the end of the week, we give them a big bunch of food," Shukuru said. "The seventh day is a holiday. We're giving them watermelons, sweet potatoes, corn, carrots to enjoy their weekend."

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Backfired: Ignorance of culture, confusion, division cited in drug war's failure

FROM FRONT PAGE

Many of the suspected labs turned out to be empty, mud-walled compounds. After more than 200 airstrikes, the U.S. military concluded it was a waste of resources to keep blowing up primitive targets with advanced aircraft and laser-guided munitions.

Of all the failures in Afghanistan, the war on drugs has been perhaps the most feckless, according to a cache of confidential government interviews and other documents obtained by The Washington Post.

Since 2001, the United States has spent about \$9 billion on a dizzying array of programs to deter Afghanistan from supplying the world with heroin. In dozens of interviews, however, key players in the anti-narcotics campaign acknowledged that none of the measures have worked and that, in many cases, they have made things worse.

Mohammed Ehsan Zia, a former Afghan Cabinet minister in charge of rural development programs, told U.S. government interviewers that the United States and other NATO countries never settled on an effective strategy and just threw money at the opium problem. He said they constantly changed policies and relied on a carousel of consultants who were ignorant about Afghanistan.

"Foreigners read 'Kite Runner' [the] plane and believe they are an expert on Afghanistan and then never listen," Zia said, referring to the best-selling novel about an Afghan boy haunted by oppression and ethnic strife. "The only thing they are experts in is bureaucracy."

Afghanistan dominates the global opium markets. Last year, it produced 82% of the world's supply, according to estimates by the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime.

Defying U.S. efforts to curtail it, Afghan opium production has skyrocketed over the course of the 18-year war. Last year, Afghan farmers grew poppies — the plant from which opium is extracted to make heroin — on four times as much land as they did in 2002.

With business booming, the opium industry has tightened its stranglehold, a former Drug Enforcement Administration agent who led a federal counter-narcotics task force in Kabul from 2004 to 2007, told government interviewers. "The biggest problem was corruption in Afghanistan and drugs was part of it. You couldn't deal with one without dealing with the other."

The United States and its closest

NATO ally, Britain, tried all sorts of strategies to shrink opium production. They bribed farmers to stop cultivating poppies, hired mercenaries to invade poppy fields and drew up plans to spray defoliants from the sky. But the poppies spread anyway.

The State Department and DEA have led most of those efforts for the United States. For most of the war, the U.S. military has struggled to make up its mind about how involved it should get in the opium wars.

During the George W. Bush administration, most U.S. generals wanted nothing to do with the battle over opium. According to the interviews, they saw it as a distraction or hindrance to their primary mission of fighting terrorists.

During the Obama administration, as evidence mounted that drug money was financing the insurgency, the generals began to see opium as a military threat. Because the generals' war strategy hinged on winning the support of the Afghan people, however, they were reluctant to take action that could alienate poppy farmers — a large chunk of the population — or U.S.-friendly warlords who profited from opium trafficking.

The previously undisclosed interviews were conducted between 2014 and 2018 by the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, or SIGAR, for a special project called "Lessons Learned."

In June 2018, SIGAR published a 270-page report that documented the failure of the war on Afghan opium and made policy recommendations — in flat, bureaucratic jargon — for dealing with the problem.

"A whole-of-government U.S. counter-narcotics strategy should be developed to coordinate various agencies around shared, long-term goals," the report concluded. "The goals of a U.S. counter-narcotics strategy should be aligned with and integrated into the larger security, development, and government objectives of the United States and the host nation."

But the Lessons Learned report omitted the names of the vast majority of those who were interviewed and left out their toughest criticisms. The Post used SIGAR in federal court to force it to release transcripts and notes of the interviews under the Freedom of Information Act.

To supplement the Lessons Learned interviews, The Post obtained several oral history interviews that the nonprofit Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training conducted with U.S. officials who served in Afghanistan, as well as confidential memos that then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld wrote about the Afghan drug trade.

Together, the documents reveal that many people involved in the



JUSTIN T. UDEGRAFF/U.S. Marine Corps

An Afghan National Police officer spreads out tires before the top layer of confiscated drugs gets added during a periodic drug burn at Bost Airfield, Afghanistan, on Nov. 2, 2017.



CHRISTOPHER MCCULLOUGH/U.S. Army

Afghan national army Capt. Sayed Baba Mansory destroys opium poppy plants discovered during a routine patrol outside the village of Samogay, Afghanistan, on May 7, 2012.

war on opium thought the policies they were carrying out made no sense.

"I was convinced we were doing the wrong things and history would come to judge" those in charge, an unnamed British official said in a Lessons Learned interview in June 2016. The official said the outcome was "a legacy that shows what we did was harmful. Partly because people are stupid and partly because they actively choose not to listen."

An unnamed U.S. official gave a similar account of foolishness and blamed bureaucratic infighting for many of the problems.

"There was violent competition in Washington not only within Congress, between the Hill and the administration but also between different parts of the administration," the U.S. official told government interviewers in May 2016. "It was sad to see so many people behave so stupidly."

Handscorable Afghan farmers have been growing varieties

of the opium poppy — Papaver somniferum — for generations. With a little irrigation, the plants thrive in warm, dry climates and are especially bountiful in the southern provinces of Helmand and Kandahar, the heart of the insurgency.

Early on, President Bush asked the United Nations and NATO allies to tackle the problems of opium production and trafficking. Britain agreed to take charge but got off to a disastrous start, according to the interviews.

In the spring of 2002, British officials floated an irresistible offer. They agreed to pay Afghan poppy farmers \$700 an acre — a fortune in the impoverished, war-ravaged country — to destroy their crops.

Word of the \$30 million program ignited a poppy-growing frenzy. Farmers planted as many poppies as they could, offering part of their yield to the British while selling the rest on the open market.

Others harvested the opium

sap right before destroying their plants and got paid anyway.

In a Lessons Learned interview, Anthony Fitzherbert, a British agricultural expert, called the cash-for-poppies program "an appalling piece of complete raw naivete," saying that the people in charge had "no knowledge of nuances and [I] don't know they really cared."

Wankel, the former DEA agent, said the Pentagon and the British government were slow to recognize that narcotics were fueling the insurgency.

"The U.S. military didn't want to deal with the drugs issue — better to be an ostrich — had to take them kicking and screaming," he said in a Lessons Learned interview. "[It] created a whole new problem that the military didn't know how to deal with."

Prodded by Congress to do something, in 2004 the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, or INL, took a hard line.

The agency hired a small army of 1,200 security contractors to crack down against poppy farming, including mercenaries from South Africa, veterans of the Balkan wars and Gurkha soldiers from Nepal, according to Ronald McMullen, who served as director of the agency's Afghanistan-Pakistan office from 2006 to 2007.

In an oral history interview, McMullen said that when he was tasked with the office he was baffled by some of the tactics the contractors and Afghan counter-narcotics police were using.

"I was shocked to learn that the American-funded anti-poppy police unit was eradicating Afghan poppies by hand," he said.

"We'd send a truck of counter-narcotics police out to a field of blossoming opium poppies, the police would hop out of the truck, pick up sticks and walk through the field whacking poppies with their sticks."

SEE BACKFIRED ON PAGE 7

WAR ON TERRORISM

Afghan president wins in preliminary count

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghanistan's president has won a second term in office, securing a tiny majority of the ballots cast three months ago, according to a preliminary vote count announced Sunday. His opponents can still challenge those results.

If the results hold and Ashraf Ghani remains president, it could give him the authority he has been seeking to demand a leading role in peace talks with the Taliban.

The country's election commission said Ghani got 50.64% of the votes in the Sept. 28 presidential poll. The results of the presiden-

tial election have been repeatedly delayed amid accusations of misconduct and technical problems.

Ghani appears to have beaten out his main challenger, Abdullah Abdullah, who serves as the country's chief executive in a fragile national unity government and who rejected the results.

Ghani and his government have been sidelined during the past year of direct talks between the U.S. and the Taliban. Washington seeks to withdraw its combat troops and end 18 years of fighting in Afghanistan, America's longest war.

In a live TV speech later Sunday, Ghani hailed the announce-

ment as a victory of the nation and pledged to "represent the whole nation."

"We will connect and unite all Afghans. We will end the crisis and all divisions by building a responsible government," he told a crowd of supporters gathered at the presidential palace.

As for foreign aid, "we are not asking for a donation, our shared interests ensure our relations with countries," he said.

Abdullah's office released a statement saying the results were "not legitimate" and that they were "based on the fraudulent vote without considering the legal demands of the candidates."

U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan John R. Bass tweeted: "It's important for all Afghans to remember these results are preliminary. Many steps remain before final election results are certified, to ensure the Afghan people have confidence in the results."

For now, Ghani's lead appears secure as there also won't be any decision on whether a second round of voting is needed until the final results are out. Afghan election laws say a runoff must take place if no candidate obtains over 50% of the votes.

The preliminary results found Ghani won 923,868 votes, while Abdullah won 720,990 votes, ac-

cording to Hawa Alam Nuristani, the head of the Independent Election Commission.

She did not give a specific percentage for Abdullah during the press conference in the capital, Kabul, but he appeared to have received 39.52%.

The U.N. secretary-general's special representative for Afghanistan, Tadamichi Yamamoto, said the commission "has an obligation to adjudicate any complaints it receives transparently and thoroughly so the election process may conclude in a credible manner" and that "all candidates have the chance to raise any concerns they may have."

Backfired: Counterinsurgency, counternarcotics efforts were at odds

FROM PAGE 6

Many U.S. lawmakers and Bush administration officials wanted to adopt an aggressive approach that Washington had backed in Colombia to combat cocaine trafficking. A core part of that program, known as Plan Colombia, was the aerial spraying of herbicides to eradicate coca plants — despite concerns that the chemicals could cause cancer.

However, the U.S. military and British lobbied Afghan President Hamid Karzai against the plan.

The dissension made Karzai even more suspicious about U.S. motives. He rejected the spraying plan and reacted coolly to other proposals to restrict poppy farming and prosecute suspected opium traffickers.

"Urging Karzai to mount an effective counternarcotics campaign was like asking an American president to halt all U.S. economic activity west of the Mississippi," McMullen, the former INL director, said in his oral-history interview. "That was the magnitude of what we were asking the Afghans to do."

The U.S. policy changed immediately after Barack Obama's election in 2009.

The State Department's new special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, had written an op-ed in *The Post* a year earlier blasting the Bush administration's poppy eradication efforts as "the single most ineffective program in the history of American foreign policy."

Upon taking office, Holbrooke brought eradication to a standstill. The U.S. government shifted its focus to programs that tried to persuade Afghan poppy farmers to switch to other crops or adopt other livelihoods altogether.

But those efforts mostly backfired. In Helmand province, the epicenter of the poppy belt, USAID and the U.S. military paid Afghans to dig or renovate miles of canals and ditches to irrigate fruit trees and other crops. But the canals worked just as well to irrigate poppies — which were

much more profitable to grow.

U.S. military commanders were relieved by the Obama administration's decision to abandon poppy eradication programs. They saw them as unnecessary irritants to Afghan villagers whose loyalty they were trying to win, according to William Wechsler, who served as the Pentagon's top civilian in charge of drug issues

from 2007 to 2012.

At the same time, military officials were growing concerned that the opium trade was providing a major revenue stream to the Taliban, which imposed taxes on farmers and traffickers. U.S. commanders wanted badly to deprive the Taliban of drug money but were not sure how to do it, Wechsler told government

interviewers.

Todd Greentree, a former State Department official who served as a political adviser to the U.S. military in Afghanistan from 2008 to 2012, said it proved impossible to develop a coherent strategy for all arms of the U.S. government.

"There was contradiction between counternarcotics and coun-

terinsurgency, because so much of the rural population depended on income from opium production," he said in an oral-history interview.

"Counterinsurgency operations that relied on support of the population would be disrupted by counternarcotics operations that were intended to eradicate opium."



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NATION

US boosts efforts to seize land for Texas border wall

By NOMAAN MERCHANT
Associated Press

HOUSTON — Three years into Donald Trump's presidency, the U.S. government is ramping up its efforts to seize private land in Texas to build a border wall.

Trump's signature campaign promise has consistently faced political, legal and environmental obstacles in Texas, which has the largest section of the U.S.-Mexico border, most of it without fencing. And much of the land along the Rio Grande, the river that forms the border in Texas, is privately held and environmentally sensitive.

Almost no land has been taken so far. But Department of Justice lawyers have filed three lawsuits this month seeking to take property from landowners. On Tuesday, lawyers moved to seize land in one case immediately before a scheduled court hearing in February.

The agency says it's ready to file many more petitions to take private land in the coming weeks. While progress has lagged, the process of taking land under eminent domain is weighted heavily in the government's favor.

The U.S. government has built about 90 miles of walls since Trump took office, almost all of it replacing old fencing. Reaching Trump's oft-stated goal of 500 miles by the end of 2020 will almost certainly require stepping up progress in Texas.

Opponents have lobbied Congress to limit funding

and prevent construction in areas like the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, a national sanctuary for several endangered species of jaguars, birds and other animals, as well as the nonprofit National Butterfly Center and a historic Catholic chapel. They have also filed several lawsuits.

A federal judge this month prevented the government from building with money redirected to the wall under Trump's declaration of a national emergency earlier this year. Also, two judges recently ordered a private, pro-Trump fundraising group to stop building its own wall near the Rio Grande.

Even on land the government owns, construction has been held up. In another federal wildlife refuge, at a site known as La Parida Banco, work crews cleared brush last spring and the government announced in April that construction would soon begin. Eight months later, the site remains empty.

According to a U.S. official familiar with the project, work crews discovered that the land was too saturated. The planned metal bollards installed on top of concrete panels would have been unstable because of the water levels in the soil, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the person did not have authorization to share the information publicly.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection declined to comment on the issue of saturation at La Parida Banco, saying construction there was "currently in the design phase."



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., center, has declined to send the two articles of impeachment to the Senate until the GOP provides trial details.

White House predicts Pelosi will yield on impeachment delay

By HOPE YEN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House tried to make the case Sunday that Speaker Nancy Pelosi has put herself in an untenable position by stalling House-passed articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump in hopes of shaping the upcoming Senate trial.

A senior administration official suggested the top Democrat in Congress would soon relent, paving the way for leaders in the Republican-controlled Senate to settle on the contours of a trial that is likely to result in Trump's acquittal on charges of obstruction of Congress and abuse of power. An influential senator and key Trump ally predicted that the drive by Pelosi, D-Calif. and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., for new witnesses and testimony would be for naught.

"She will yield. There's no way she can hold this position," said Marc Short, the chief of staff to Vice President Mike Pence. "We think her case is going nowhere." The House voted last week to

impeach Trump, who became only the third president in U.S. history to be formally charged with "high crimes and misdemeanors." Pelosi has declined to send the articles of impeachment to the Senate until Republicans provide details on witnesses and testimony.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and Schumer have been at an impasse over the issue, leaving open the possibility of a protracted delay until the articles are delivered.

McConnell has all but promised an easy acquittal of the president. McConnell appears to have united Republicans behind an approach that would begin the trial with presentations and arguments, lasting perhaps two weeks, before he tries drawing the proceedings to a close.

That has sparked a fight with Pelosi and Schumer, who are demanding trial witnesses who refused to appear during House committee hearings, including acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney and former national security adviser John Bolton.

Amid impeachment focus, Senate continues transformation of courts

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Amid intense focus on impeachment and year-end deals on spending and trade, the Senate hurtled toward a less-heralded accomplishment: confirming another batch of conservative judges.

Senators confirmed 13 of President Donald Trump's judicial nominees, bringing to 102 the number of federal judges approved this year — more than twice the annual average over the past three decades.

The steady transformation of the courts reflects the single-minded focus of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who has vowed to "leave no vacancy behind" as he and Trump seek to tilt the judicial branch to the right.

The judicial confirmations include 20 additions to the U.S. Court of Appeals, bringing to 50 the

number of federal appeals court judges confirmed in Trump's first three years in office. The relentless pace means that more than a quarter of all federal appeals court judges were nominated by Trump and confirmed by the Republican-controlled Senate.

"While all eyes were understandably on impeachment, Mitch McConnell's conveyor belt churned out a shocking number of judges this week in what remains the most underrated story of the Trump era," said Christopher Kang, chief counsel at Demand Justice, a liberal advocacy group.

"Trump's hijacking of our judiciary will be his most enduring legacy, and it will continue to threaten everything progressives care about long after he leaves office," Kang said.

Last week, the Senate confirmed two conservative lawyers

to posts on a California-based appeals court that Trump has tagged as a liberal bastion.

Lawrence VanDyke, a deputy assistant attorney general from Nevada, and Patrick Bumattay, a federal prosecutor from southern California, were approved in separate votes to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

One unspoken factor propelling Republicans forward is the calendar. With no guarantee that a Republican will be in the White House come January 2021, there is an emphasis on filling vacancies now.

McConnell "is moving nominees as quickly as he can (through the Senate), just in case Trump loses in 2020," said Carl Tobias, a law professor at the University of Richmond.

Police: 13 wounded in shooting at memorial party in Chicago

Associated Press

CHICAGO — A shooting early Sunday at a house party held in honor of someone who was killed in April left 13 people wounded, four of them critically, Chicago police said.

The shooting stemmed from a dispute at the memorial party. Chief of Patrol Fred Waller said at an early morning news conference. He said shots were first

fired just after 12:30 a.m.

The victims range in age from 16 to 48 and suffered "different and various gunshot wounds to their bodies."

Two people were being questioned, Waller said. One of them was arrested with a weapon, he said, while the other was wounded. Waller said police recovered a revolver.

"It looked like they were just

shooting randomly at people as they exited the party," Waller said.

Waller did not provide details on the person who was being memorialized.

Waller described three shooting scenes at the residential location in the city's Englewood neighborhood, a predominantly low-income stretch of the city roughly 10 miles southwest of

downtown that has high crime. The shooting started inside, then more shots were fired as people began spilling out of the house. Shots were also fired at a third place nearby, Waller said.

He described the shooting as an "isolated incident."

The shooting comes as the city has been on the verge of closing out 2019 with sizable drops in shootings and homicides for

the third straight year. Through roughly mid-December, about 475 people were killed, compared with 549 in 2018, which is a 14% drop.

Police have credited Chicago's drop in crime to the use of technology used to predict where shootings might occur, while experts also credit anti-violence programs that offer jobs and gang conflict mediation.

NATION

6 killed, 13 hurt in Las Vegas apartment fire

By MICHELLE L. PRICE,
PAUL DAVENPORT
AND MARC LEVY
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — A fire in a three-story apartment building in downtown Las Vegas where residents were apparently using their stoves for heat killed six people and forced some residents to jump from upper-floor windows to escape the heavy smoke before dawn Saturday, authorities said.

Investigators reported that the fire started around a first-floor unit's stove and that residents had told them that there was no heat in the building, which sits a few blocks from downtown Las Vegas' touristy Fremont Street District.

Residents reported awakening to pounding on doors around 4 a.m.

By the time Matthew Sykes got his clothes on to flee, one end of his second-floor hallway was choked with thick black smoke, as was a stairwell, making it impassable for he and his wife.

"The whole place was like one big black cloud of smoke — couldn't get down the stairs," Sykes told The Associated Press.

Firefighters arriving at the



STEVE MARCUS, LAS VEGAS SUN/AP

Firefighters work the scene of a fire at a three-story apartment complex on Saturday in Las Vegas.

scene began treating injured and using ladders to rescue numerous people already jumping or hanging from windows, fire department spokesman Tim Szymanski said.

"The first thing that you think

of is: We've got to rescue those people," he said. "A fall of 16 feet or higher can be fatal."

Thirteen people were injured, mostly from smoke inhalation, but victims also had fractures, Szymanski said.

The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported that a pregnant woman in her first trimester fell after her hands slipped on a rope of bed-sheets while descending from her third-floor apartment, leaving her with multiple fractures. Her

husband told the newspaper that medical personnel told him the fetus' heartbeat appeared strong.

Three people were found dead in the apartment where the fire started, Szymanski said.

It wasn't immediately clear if anyone died after falling or jumping from windows, Szymanski said. No firefighters were injured.

The cause of the fire appeared to be accidental, and the fire was largely contained to the first-floor unit where it started in the stove area, Szymanski said. Firefighters found the burners on, Szymanski said.

Residents told investigators and reporters that some had been using their apartment's stoves for warmth because the building lacked heat. Temperatures overnight were being dipping into the high 30s, according to the National Weather Service. Meteorologist Chris Outler said the low was 40 degrees early Sunday.

Szymanski said firefighters reported hearing smoke alarms going off but not fire alarms. The State Fire Marshal's Office will investigate for code violations, including any involving fire alarms, he said.



AUBREY GEMIGNANI, NASA/AP

The Boeing CST-100 Starliner spacecraft lands in White Sands, N.M., on Sunday.

Boeing capsule returns after mishap

By MARCIA DUNN
Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Boeing safely landed its crew capsule in the New Mexico desert Sunday after an aborted flight to the International Space Station that threatened to set back the company's effort to launch astronauts for NASA next year.

The Starliner descended into the Army's White Sands Missile Range in the frigid predawn darkness, ending a two-day demo that should have lasted more than a week. A trio of red, white and blue parachutes popped open and airbags also inflated around the spacecraft to ease the impact.

"Congratulations, Starliner," said Mission Control, calling it a successful touchdown.

A test dummy named Rosie the Rocketeer — after Rosie the Riveter from World War II — rode in the commander's seat. Also returning were holiday presents, clothes and food that should have been delivered to the space station crew.

After seeing this first test flight cut short and the space station docking canceled because of an improperly set clock on the capsule, Boeing employees were relieved to get the Starliner back.

It was the first American-made capsule designed for astronauts to make a ground landing after

returning from orbit.

The capsule's first trip to space began with a smooth rocket ride from Cape Canaveral on Friday. But barely a half-hour into the flight, it failed to fire its thrusters to give chase to the space station and ended up in the wrong orbit.

The problem was with the Starliner's internal clock. It did not sync up with the Atlas V rocket, throwing off the capsule's timing.

The capsule burned so much fuel trying to orient itself in orbit that there wasn't enough left for a space station rendezvous.

Boeing is still trying to figure out how the timing error occurred.

Second Amendment Sanctuary push aims to defy new gun laws

By DENISE LAVOIE
Associated Press

BUCKINGHAM, Va. — A standing-room-only crowd of more than 400 packed the meeting room, filled the lobby and spilled into the parking lot recently in rural Buckingham County, Va. They had one thing on their minds: guns.

The vast majority favored a proposal to protect their right to carry firearms: declaring the county a Second Amendment Sanctuary.

Similar scenes have played out across Virginia over the last few weeks. Gun owners are descending on local offices to demand that

their government leaders establish sanctuaries for gun rights.

The resolutions, promoted heavily by the gun rights group Virginia Citizens Defense League, vary from county to county, but most declare the intention of local officials to oppose any "unconstitutional restrictions" on the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. In the last two months, more than 100 counties, cities and towns in Virginia have approved such resolutions.

The current movement began last year in Illinois and quickly spread to numerous states, including California, Colorado, New Mexico and Florida.

In Virginia, home to the Nation-

al Rifle Association's headquarters, lawmakers in both parties have traditionally supported gun rights. But in recent years, Democrats have backed tighter restrictions on guns.

The Second Amendment Sanctuary movement began after Democrats promising new gun control laws took over both chambers of the state legislature in the Nov. 5 election.

Gun control proposals gained momentum after a shooter killed 12 people and injured four others at a Virginia Beach municipal building in May. But a special legislative session called by Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam after the mass shooting failed to pro-

duce any new gun control bills when Republicans shut it down after just 90 minutes.

Gun control advocates are now proposing an array of new restrictions, including universal background checks, assault weapon bans and red flag laws that would allow authorities to temporarily take guns away from people deemed dangerous to themselves or others.

But many see the bill as the first step down a slippery slope that will end with their guns being taken away.

David Campbell, vice chairman of the Effingham County Board in Illinois, said his county was one of the first in the nation to pass

a Second Amendment Sanctuary resolution in April 2018. Campbell said he and a local prosecutor chose the word "sanctuary" as a swipe at Democratic leaders who used the word to describe their refusal to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement in the "sanctuary cities" movement.

The movement caught fire, and today, 70 out of the 102 counties in Illinois have approved the resolutions, Campbell said.

"What it's designed to do is to send a message to our legislators letting them know we are not going to stand for unconstitutional laws being passed like they are trying to do," Campbell said.

NATION

Jane Fonda gets arrested for 5th time, turns 82

By MARISSA J. LANG
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Jane Fonda, who has been leading weekly climate change protests called “Fire Drill Fridays” since early October, was arrested Friday along with 137 other demonstrators inside the Hart Senate Office Building, where 50 U.S. senators have offices.

As she was led away by a Capitol Police officer, her hands bound by zip ties, a demonstrator called out to the crowd, “Everybody sing ‘happy birthday’ to Jane!” She pumped her arms above her head in triumph as the crowd broke into song.

Fonda turned 82 on Saturday. The arrest is her fifth in the past three months during demonstrations calling for government action on the environment, a reduction in fossil fuel production and congressional approval of the Green New Deal, an aggressive decadal plan to address climate change.

Demonstrators who rack up multiple public disturbance arrests in a short time are typically held overnight in the District of Columbia jail and made to appear in front of a judge before they can be set free. It’s not clear whether Fonda spent her birthday in jail. Last month, after Fonda’s fourth arrest, she slept on a mattress less cot in the jail, where she loaned her signature red coat to a fellow shivering inmate inside the drafty building. Upon her release, Fonda said, one of her jailers told her, “There’s gotta

be a better way to call attention to your cause.”

“I think she’s right,” Fonda said as she walked out of the H. Carl Moultrie Courthouse the next day. “My 82-year-old bones hurt.”

Fonda had been stepping aside for the past several weeks, encouraging others to be arrested in her stead. Police have arrested several celebrities, including Sally Field and Ted Danson, at the demonstrations. Other activists also have been arrested in droves.

But on Friday, Fonda — whose 1970 raised-fist mug shot has been a symbol of civil disobedience — stepped back into the fray.

The rally began in front of the Capitol, where Fonda led a crowd in chants and song. As she climbed to a stage on the Capitol lawn, demonstrators greeted the two-time Oscar-winning actress with a round of “Happy Birthday.”

She was joined by other long-time activists, including the Rev. William J. Barber, who revived the economic justice Poor People’s Campaign, Buddhist teacher and civil rights activist Roshi Joan Halifax, labor organizer Dolores Huerta and feminist activist Gloria Steinem.

Halifax, Barber and Steinem were arrested too. Steinem is 85.



Fonda



WASHINGTON COUNTY, Mo./AP

Wreckage of a freight line train is shown in the Potomac River on Saturday near Harpers Ferry, W.Va.

Empty freight train derails in W.Va

Associated Press

HARPERS FERRY, W.Va. — A freight train derailed as it crossed the Potomac River near Harpers Ferry, sending two cars into the water and damaging a footbridge that is part of the Appalachian Trail. CSX said in a statement that there were no injuries early Saturday morning when seven cars in total derailed. CSX said all the cars were empty and no hazardous materials were involved.

CSX said the cause of the derailment is under investigation and it will work swiftly to clean up and

restore the area.

The National Park Service said the derailment closed access to some parts of Harpers Ferry National Historic Park and the Chesapeake & Ohio National Historic Park.

Photos released by the park service showed damaged to a footbridge that’s attached to the CSX bridge and is a part of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The park service said that footbridge was closed indefinitely and referred hikers to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy for updates.

Texas law to curb jailhouse suicides fails to make a dent in the number

By RIIN ALJAS
AND RYAN E. LITTLE
Capital News Service

In a county jail in central Texas, an inmate on suicide watch began strangling himself with a phone cord. The guard watching him did not rush in because of security rules that prohibit him from going into a cell alone, leading to an agonizing 10-minute wait before another staffer arrived to provide backup.

Derrek Monroe, who died the next day in a hospital, was among the first of 48 jail suicides since the 2017 launch of a sweeping Texas law aimed at reducing such deaths through better screening and monitoring. That law hasn’t made a dent in the number of suicides, and experts blame its failure to address one of the most significant factors: the lack of staff to watch troubled inmates.

“Jails are understaffed and often very understaffed,” said Diana Claitor, executive director of the Texas Jail Project, which advocates for inmates and their families. “You know you have to check a suicidal inmate, but at the same time, another crisis or fight occurs down the hall, and you have to go there. If you don’t have any extra personnel because someone is sick, you’re doing everything alone.”

In a joint reporting effort, The

Associated Press and the University of Maryland’s Capital News Service compiled a database of more than 400 lawsuits in the last five years alleging mistreatment of inmates in U.S. prisons and jails. Close to 40% involved suicides in local jails — 135 deaths and 30 attempts. All but eight involved allegations of neglect by the staff.

“It’s not always maliciousness,” Claitor said. “We’re talking about people who are doing a very tough job.”

Texas became a national flashpoint in the debate over jailhouse suicides and treatment of mentally ill inmates after the highly publicized 2015 case of Sandra Bland, a black activist who killed herself in a county jail three days after her arrest in a contentious traffic stop.

Her death led to protests, debate and ultimately an ambitious law in her name that sought to be a national model. It included policy changes that required mentally ill inmates to be diverted toward treatment, independent investigation of jail deaths, de-escalation training for police and funding for electronic sensors or cameras for accurate and timely cell checks.

But critics note that the law had no requirement for money for additional guards, and jailhouse suicides remain a stubborn prob-

lem in Texas. The 22 suicides in the state’s jails this year through November already surpass the 17 in all of last year, a nearly 30% increase.

Since the Sandra Bland Act went into effect in September 2017, state figures show staffing levels at Texas’ 239 local jails have remained largely unchanged at around 25,000 jailers. Jails are still required only to meet state standards that mandate a minimum of one jailer for every 48 inmates in a single-story jail. In multistory jails, a guard is required for each floor with 10 or more inmates.

At the time of Derrek Monroe’s video-recorded suicide attempt on Oct. 1, 2017, the Coleman County Jail met state standards with a single guard overseeing nine inmates and two floors, even though Monroe was on a suicide watch because of another attempt the day before.

Smith said the biggest issue in Waller County is keeping trained staff, noting that he often loses guards to larger jails in other counties where there are more opportunities for advancement. Other guards leave because they are burned out working hard hours for little pay.

“They’re incarcerated every day along with the inmates,” Smith said. “They just don’t want to do that 20 years.”

San Quentin Prison inmates run in annual jail marathon

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Once a year, the running club at San Quentin Prison gets a chance to race in pursuit of glory.

The San Francisco Chronicle reported that 30 inmates took part in the annual San Quentin Prison Marathon held on Nov. 22. The 26.2-mile run loops 105 times around the outdoor track of California’s oldest prison.

Aged 22 to 72, the competitors are all members of the maximum-security prison’s 1,000 Mile Club and include inmates incarcerated for rape, attempted murder and other charges.

Running takes you out of this place,” said Mark Alan Jarosik, this year’s winner, who finished

at 3:16:38.

Fidelio Marin finished second at 3:18:24, despite rolling his ankle on one of the final laps.

Jarosik, a former architect, was convicted of rape and attempting to murder his ex-girlfriend in 2012. Marin was convicted of murdering his estranged wife in 2011. Both are lifers, like most of the inmates at the prison at the northern edge of San Francisco Bay.

Markelle “The Gazelle” Taylor, who won last year’s marathon, holds the prison record of 3:10:42. After 18 years behind bars on a second-degree murder conviction, Taylor was released on parole in March. A month later, he ran the Boston Marathon in 3:03:52, a personal best.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man pleads to operating cargo ship while drunk

CA SAN FRANCISCO — A Ukrainian man pleaded guilty to being intoxicated while operating a cargo ship in San Francisco Bay, the U.S. attorney's office announced.

Vadim Humenyuk, 51, of Izmail acknowledged that he was under the influence while serving as master, or head officer, of the Rainbow Quest on Dec. 10, authorities said.

The 590-foot-long Gibraltar-flagged bulk carrier had fueled up in the bay and was preparing to sail to South Korea when a harbor pilot notified the Coast Guard that Humenyuk appeared to be intoxicated.

Site tells residents when snowplow might arrive

NV RENO — Lake Tahoe-area residents stuck in snow, hoping to go and waiting for their road to be cleared have a new way to see when a snowplow might arrive.

Washoe County Roads began posting a snowplow monitoring system featuring an interactive map showing where trucks are operating in Incline Village and Crystal Bay in nearly real-time.

County Community Services Operations chief Eric Crump said that by equipping trucks with automated vehicle locator technology, people can see which areas have recently been plowed.

Family discovers owl in Christmas tree

GA ATLANTA — A Georgia family got a real hoot from its Christmas tree: More than a week after they bought it, they discovered a live owl nestled among its branches.

Katie McBride Newman said that she and her daughter spotted the bird Dec. 12. They had bought the 10-foot tall tree from a Home Depot, taken it back to their Atlanta area home and decorated it.

The family called a nonprofit nature center for help. The Chatahoochee Nature Center caught the bird and helped the family release it.

Principal apologizes after seizing kids' pizzas

IA DES MOINES — A Des Moines middle school principal apologized for denying students pizzas that had already been delivered to their classroom for a year-end pizza party promised by their teacher.

Brody Middle School Principal Thomas Hoffman intercepted the pizzas last week, citing a school finances policy. That led parent Neil Erickson to post about the incident on social media, saying his son and his classmates were unfairly denied and that their teacher was "left in tears."

Hoffman issued a public apology, saying he was "overly strict" in applying the school's standards.

Several restaurants planned to send pizzas to the school, the newspaper reported.



ROBERT F. BUKATY/AP

All aboard The Polar Express

Passengers check out the steam locomotive prior to boarding The Polar Express on Friday in Portland, Maine. The annual holiday journey is the largest fundraiser for the Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum.

Deputies: Man stole car with sleeping man inside

NM LAS CRUCES — A New Mexico man faces charges after authorities said he stole a car without knowing that another man was sleeping inside.

Joseph Allen, 40, of Las Cruces was arrested in connection with the theft of the running car in Vado, the Las Cruces Sun-News reported.

According to the Dona Ana County Sheriff's Office, Ignacio Baca, of Las Cruces, told authorities the episode began after he fell asleep in the back seat of his girlfriend's 2006 Toyota Corolla.

Baca told Dona Ana County Sheriff's Detective Ileana Adame that he'd left the vehicle running while he was sleeping, and later woke up and realized the car was traveling east on Interstate 10.

Allen faces several charges, including aggravated battery with a deadly weapon and auto burglary.

Temple rededicating stolen menorah

MA BROOKLINE — A stolen from a Jewish temple in a Boston suburb last year was rededicated after being recovered and repaired.

The Boston Globe reported the six-foot-tall copper menorah was one of two that had stood on the grounds of Temple Emeth in Brookline since 1948.

THE CENSUS

100

The approximate number of vehicles damaged in a BB gun rampage in Sioux Falls, S.D. Police arrested four men in connection with the rampage and one of them is facing a charge of felony intentional damage, Aberdeen American News reported. Damaged vehicles were found throughout Aberdeen and Brown County. Police said it appeared the men fired a BB gun from a moving vehicle.

It was ripped from the cement in the temple's rotunda in November 2018 and found badly broken on a street in Boston's West Roxbury neighborhood.

The owners of an auto body shop near the temple and other local residents helped restore the structure free of charge.

Authorities believe the thieves may have been trying to steal the towering candelabra for its valuable metal.

Police: Heads from snowmen returned

PA STROUDSBURG — Police in northeastern Pennsylvania said that suspects returned the decapitated heads from four snowmen placed around town as a holiday promotion and arts project.

Stroud Area Regional Police said the group of vandals captured on video in Stroudsburg came forward and admitted what happened.

The project led by the Go Collaborative picked artists for each snowman, which organizers say cost about \$2,000 apiece to manu-

facture before they were painted and otherwise decorated.

Go Collaborative president Jim Evanisko said the damaged artwork can't be fixed.

Police: Up to 50 victims in nude photo ring

GA TRENTON — Police officials in Georgia's northwestern corner said as many as 50 adults and minors may be victims of a group of people trading sexually explicit photos.

Dade County Sheriff Ray Cross and Trenton Police Chief Christy Smith told local news outlets that they're working with Dade County High School and others to identify victims.

Investigators are urging potential victims to come forward.

Man pays families' past due electric bills

FL GULF BREEZE — A Florida man who once spent a Christmas without electricity is paying it forward. He paid the power bills for 36 families with past due accounts.

Mike Esmond said he will never forget the Christmas he and his three daughters spent in 1983 without heat and power because he couldn't pay his bill. He said it was one of the coldest days on record in Pensacola at only 9 degrees and remembers there were icicles hanging off the window.

The 73-year-old small business owner went to the city of Gulf Breeze this month and requested a list of all utility accounts that were past due and at risk of having their gas and water turned off.

Then he paid off all 36 of them, totaling about \$4,600.

Police: \$4K in school basketball fees stolen

CT NEWINGTON — Police in a Connecticut town are investigating the theft of about \$4,000 in town basketball registration fees.

Newington Police said the theft happened Dec. 13 as town officials were collecting registration fees for the upcoming high school recreational basketball league.

Police said a parks and recreation department employee had left an envelope containing cash, checks and credit card information unattended at a registration table set up in the Mortensen Community Center gymnasium.

The employee returned a short time later to find it missing.

From wire reports

WORLD

N. Korean meeting eyes steps to boost military

By HUNG-JIN KIM
Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea said Sunday leader Kim Jong Un has convened a key ruling party meeting to decide on steps to bolster the country's military capability.

The meeting came amid speculation that the North could abandon diplomacy with the U.S. and launch either a long-range missile or a satellite-carrying rocket if Washington doesn't accept its demand for new incentives to salvage faltering nuclear negotiations by year's end.

The Korean Central News Agency said Kim presided over a meeting of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party. It didn't say when it took place.

It cited Kim as saying the meeting would determine "important organizational and political measures and military steps to bolster up the overall armed forces ... as required by the fast-changing situation and crucial time of the developing Korean revolution."

According to KCNA, the gathering decided on "important military issues and measures for organizing or expanding and reorganizing new units ... (and) changing

the affiliation of some units and changing deployment of others."

KCNA didn't elaborate. But South Korean media speculated the meeting might have discussed the restructuring of military units over the deployment of new weapons that the North had test-launched in recent months, and what steps it will take in coming weeks.

North Korea is to hold a higher level Workers' Party gathering, a Central Committee meeting, later this month to discuss what it previously described as "crucial issues" in line with "the changed situation at home and abroad."

In Washington, the White House said President Donald Trump discussed "recent threatening statements" by North Korea in a phone call with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The two leaders agreed to continue close communication, it said.

Earlier this month, North Korea carried out two major tests at its long-range rocket and missile engine testing site. Experts said they were engine tests that indicate that North might be preparing for a banned satellite launch or an intercontinental ballistic missile test.



PAUL WHITE/AP

A woman dressed as Santa Claus, holding a large replica lottery ticket, sits outside as others wait to enter the Teatro Real opera house for the Christmas lottery draw in Madrid on Sunday.

Spanish lottery delivers Yule cheer

Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain — The lucky holders of ticket number 26590 struck it rich in Spain on Sunday when they won the top prize in the nation's bumper Christmas lottery.

The top-prize winning number, known as El Gordo (The Fat One), worth 400,000 euros (\$436,000) fell out of the enormous metallic shuffling bins in a live televised event. The winners won 20,000 euros for each euro spent on a 20-euro ticket.

The incredibly popular lottery dishes out a total of 2.24 billion euros (\$2.43 billion) in prizes this year, including lots of smaller

prizes.

Other lotteries have bigger individual top prizes but Spain's Christmas lottery, held each year on Dec. 22, is ranked as the world's richest for the total prize money involved.

The winning tickets were sold in the northeastern provinces of Tarragona and Barcelona, in central Madrid and Salamanca, and in southern Alicante, Murcia and Seville.

Spain established its national lottery as a charity in 1763 during the reign of King Carlos III. Its objective later became to shore up state coffers and help charities.

Stripes SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market

Dental

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Transportation

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AMERICAN DOCTORS & STAFF

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STARS AND STRIPES

WORLD

Man who used narwhal tusk to stop attack ID'd

Associated Press

LONDON — A mysterious figure who used a rare narwhal tusk to help subdue a knife-wielding extremist on London Bridge last month has been identified as a civil servant in Britain's Justice Ministry.

Darryn Frost broke his silence Saturday, telling Britain's Press Association that he and others reacted instinctively when Usman



Frost

Khan started stabbing people at a prison rehabilitation program at Fishmongers' Hall next to the bridge Nov. 29.

Frost used the rare narwhal tusk that he grabbed from the wall to help subdue Khan even though the attacker claimed to be about to detonate a suicide vest, which turned out to be a fake device with no explosives. The intervention of Frost and others helped keep the death count to two.

He said another man used a chair as a weapon in the desperate struggle.

"When we heard the noise from the floor below, a few of us rushed to the scene," the 38-year-old said. "I took a narwhal tusk from the wall and used it to defend myself and others from the attacker. Another man was holding the attacker at bay with a wooden chair."

India's PM defends citizenship law at rally

NEW DELHI — Clashes continued Sunday between Indian police and protesters angered by a new citizenship law that excludes Muslims as Prime Minister Narendra Modi used a rally for his Hindu nationalist party to defend the legislation, accusing the opposition of pushing the country into a "fear psychosis."

Twenty-three people have been killed nationwide since the law was passed in Parliament earlier this month in protests that represent the first major roadblock for Modi's Hindu nationalist agenda since his party's landslide reelection last spring.

Most of the deaths have occurred in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, where 20% of the state's 200 million people are Muslims.

Aussie leader apologizes for vacation amid fires

SYDNEY — Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison apologized Sunday for taking a family vacation in Hawaii as deadly bushfires raged across several states, destroying homes and claiming the lives of two volunteer firefighters.

Morrison cut short a vacation with his wife and adult children

He said Khan had two large knives, one in each hand, and pointed at his midriff.

"He turned and spoke to me, then indicated he had an explosive device around his waist," Frost said.

"At this point, the man next to me threw his chair at the attacker, who then started running towards him with knives raised above his head."

The confrontation quickly moved onto London Bridge, where Frost and others — including one man who sprayed Khan with a fire extinguisher — managed to fight the attacker to the ground until police arrived.

The extremist, who had served prison time for earlier terrorism offenses, was shot dead by police moments later after he threatened again to detonate his vest.

There had been much speculation in the British media about the identity of the man who used the narwhal tusk in such a dangerous situation.

He was one of a handful of people who defied danger to help keep Khan from doing even more damage in the crowded hall and on the bridge.

Frost said he was "eternally grateful" to the former prisoners and the members of the public who were taking part in the meeting and ran to help.

Frost said he was withholding many details out of respect for the victims and their families and because of the ongoing investigation.

amid public anger at his absence during a national crisis and arrived home Saturday night. He spoke to reporters Sunday morning while visiting the headquarters of the Rural Fire Service in Sydney.

Thirty firefighters from Canada and nine from the United States were among fresh crews set to join the battle against the fires on Sunday.

Philippine troops rescue 2 held by militants

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine forces rescued two of three Indonesian hostages Sunday after a gunbattle with their captors from the Muslim militant group Abu Sayyaf in the southern jungles, a regional military commander said.

A soldier and a militant were killed in two successive firefights at dawn that allowed troops to rescue the two Indonesians in the mountainous hinterlands of Panamao town in Sulu province, said Lt. Gen. Cirilito Sojebana.

Troops, backed by rocket-firing helicopters, were pursuing the militants in an effort to rescue the third Indonesian, he said. The Indonesian fishermen were kidnapped by the ransom-seeking militants in September off Malaysia's Sabah state.

From The Associated Press

Fire reveals lead dust dangers

By THOMAS ADAMSON

Associated Press

PARIS — It took a blaze that nearly destroyed Paris' most famous cathedral to reveal a gap in global safety regulations for lead, a toxic building material found across many historic cities.

After the Notre Dame fire in April spewed dozens of tons of toxic lead dust into the atmosphere in just a few hours, Paris authorities discovered a problem with the city's public safety regulations: There was no threshold for them to gauge how dangerous the potentially deadly pollution was from the dust that settled on the ground.

Since then, The Associated Press has found this regulatory gap extends far beyond France.

Officials in other historic European capitals such as Rome and London, as well as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the World Health Organization, also have no such outdoor lead dust hazard guidelines.

The reason, they say, is that although there are lead regulations, no one contemplated a conflagration on a lead-laden building the scale of Notre Dame.

Poisoning from lead dust can cause permanent loss of cognitive ability, seizures, coma or death — and exposure is of greatest risk to pregnant mothers and to young children, who can easily transfer toxic dust into their mouths.

After 250 tons of lead on Notre Dame's spire and roof was engulfed in flames in central Paris on April 15 and authorities alert-

ed Parisians to an environmental health risk, they were forced to cobble together disparate and incomplete research to set a makeshift safety level in an attempt to reassure the public.

Officials were surprised to discover that while safety guidelines exist in France for lead levels inside buildings and schools, as well as in paint, soil and air pollution, there were zero hazard guidelines for lead accumulations in public spaces, such as dust on the ground.

Health officials told the AP that Paris still does not have any official regulatory threshold.

The World Health Organization told the AP it also has no outdoor safety guidelines for lead dust and has no "immediate" intention to create any.



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FACES

Q&A

Enduring droid

Anthony Daniels talks long ride as C-3PO in Star Wars films

By JONATHAN LANDRUM JR.
Associated Press

Anthony Daniels went through a painful experience after not receiving the same amount of public recognition as other co-stars when the first Star Wars film was released in 1977.

In time, Daniels' C-3PO character became one of the most popular in the franchise and he's the only cast member to have appeared in all nine of the main "Star Wars" films. The British actor plays the soft-spoken "protocol droid" built by young Anakin Skywalker that is fluent in 6 million languages. His gold-plated character also appeared in the franchise's spin-off "Rogue One," and had a cameo in "Ralph Breaks the Internet."

C-3PO's witty exchanges with fellow droid R2-D2 often served as comic relief, making the tandem fan favorites.

It's been a long ride for Daniels, 73, who believes his appearance in "The Rise of Skywalker," which opened in theaters Friday, will likely be his last film appearance as C-3PO. He highlights his Star Wars experiences in his new memoir "I Am C-3PO: The Inside Story," which was released in late October.

In a recent interview, Daniels spoke with The Associated Press about playing C-3PO and reflects on some of the best memories in the past 42 years in the iconic franchise.

AP: What has it been like to be in all nine films?

Daniels: It's been a ton of work, and a ton of employment, which is



LUCASFILM/AP

C-3PO, portrayed by Anthony Daniels, center, is shown in a scene from "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker."

great. As an actor, you're always looking for the next job. And often that next job for me has been something to do with Star Wars. The friendship and companionship of being C-3PO has been quite a gift.

Are you surprised Star Wars made it this far?

At the end of "A New Hope," the original film, I thought that was it. Twelve weeks of weird and difficult work. Not entirely wonderful. I thought that was it. Then they came and said "Let's make another one, then another." ... So I've been swept along by forces beyond my control. But finally, it is ending.

Is "A New Hope" your favorite film compared to the rest?

Yes, because I understood it. The story was simple enough that I got it. It got a bit complicated after that. It was an innocent film out of nowhere.

It was your favorite film, but you struggled with being overlooked after "Star Wars" release as well, right?

It was difficult not being associated with the film when it first

came out. That was a painful experience that lasted quite a while, but then changed over the course in time. It brings me here today with my name on the poster. Only parents care about that sort of thing.

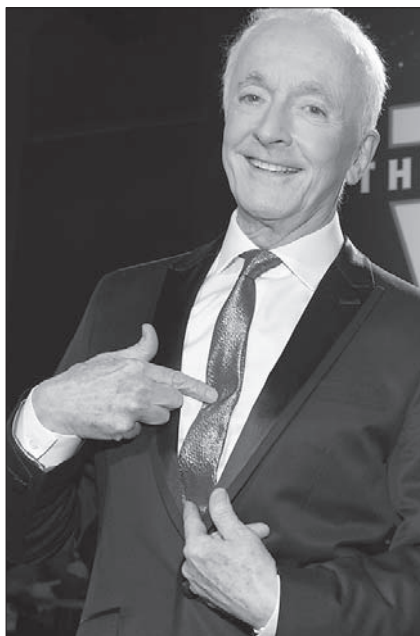
What has been your most memorable experience?

In the desert on the first episode. It was absolutely riveting. It had such an impact. Seeing the effect of people looking at me in the costume then seeing their reactions. You are the center of attention. They can't see you, but you're absorbing the energy. That was pretty intense. That stays with me.

When you put on your costume, what goes through your mind?

Here we go again. Why am I doing this? And then, adrenaline is a great thing when somebody on set says "action." Suddenly, your professional skills take over. The adrenaline gently sets in and you put up with stuff. You make it work as a professional actor.

What does the character, C-3PO, mean to you?



CHRIS PIZZELLO/AP

Anthony Daniels arrives at the world premiere of "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker" on Dec. 16 in Los Angeles.

He's kind of my friend, my companion. He's somebody I know quite well. I want to be with him all the time. I'm proud to know him.

What was it like for you not having Carrie Fisher around during filming "The Rise of Skywalker?"

It was little wistful. But she is so there in all these films. You sort of forget that she's died, because she's just there. That's the magic of the media. Nobody is re-

ally gone anymore. You may not be able to physically touch them. But they are there. There are fond memories.

What mark has your character and Star Wars left?

It's so big that I kind of don't get it yet. I need to be away from it for a while. Maybe I need to talk to more fans. So many people say "Thank you for my childhood." We have given people a lot of stuff. They have given back with all their enthusiasm and affection.

Del Rey releasing spoken-word album

From wire reports

New year, new Lana Del Rey.

The singer-songwriter announced Friday that she'll release a spoken-word album next month for "around \$1," and that half of the profits will be donated to Native American organizations. The lyricist, who is known for weaving spoken-word into her music, explained her choices as she shared the news on social media.

"My new book, 'Violet Bent Backwards Over the Grass,' is taking a lot longer to hand-bind than I thought, and I just wanted to let you know that I'm going to put up a spoken-word album, if you can call that," she said in an Instagram video. "I knew I wanted the album to be around \$1 because I just loved the idea that thoughts are meant to be shared and that they were priceless in some way."

The album, similar to her forthcoming book, will feature Del Rey's "freestyle poetry." It will be her first all-spoken-word collection, coming months after she dropped her critically acclaimed latest studio effort, "Norman F---ing Rockwell."

"There was a second part that I had been thinking of before releasing it, which was that I wanted

half of what the spoken-word album was going for to benefit Native American organizations around the country, whether it was for preserving their rights or trying to help keep their land intact," she said.

The "Summertime Sadness" hit-maker elaborated that a previous effort to trace her family lineage had deepened her connection to America and partly inspired one of her prior projects. Del Rey's music, such as 2012's "American," has been known to feature patriotic themes.

"I just really wanted to pay homage to the country that I love so much by doing my own reparation, I guess I would say — my own reparative act," she said in the video. "I have no reasoning for it, other than it just feels right to me. And so, for as long as my album, my spoken-word album, is distributed, half of it will be going to Native American organizations across America, so I'm very excited about that, and I'm in the middle of speaking to people from the organizations that will change every year."

Described as "not particularly polished" and "a bit more gritty," the album will serve as a sort of late holiday gift to her fans, who as of Friday had already viewed the announcement video more than a million times.



JAY L. CLENDENIN, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

Pop star Lana Del Rey said half the profits from her album of "freestyle poetry" will be donated to Native American organizations around the U.S.

Other news

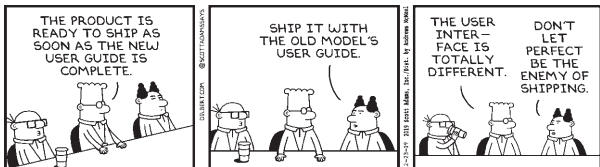
■ Idris Elba and his wife have been granted honorary citizenship in his late father's homeland of Sierra Leone. Authorities gave diplomatic passports Friday to the British star and his Canadian wife, Sabrina Dhowre, asking them to serve as "brand ambassadors" for the country. Sierra Leone is home to chimpanzees, pristine beaches and surfing, but the country is more widely known as the scene of a brutal war in the late 1990s.

■ The NBA announced that Grammy winners Common and Chance The Rapper will be headliners at the All-Star Game in Chicago on Feb. 16. Both performers were born in Chicago. Common will deliver remarks about what basketball means to the city before he introduces the rosters before the game. Chance The Rapper and some guests will perform at halftime, doing a medley of some of his biggest hits.

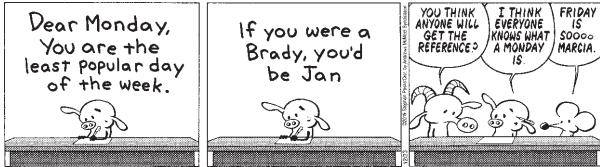
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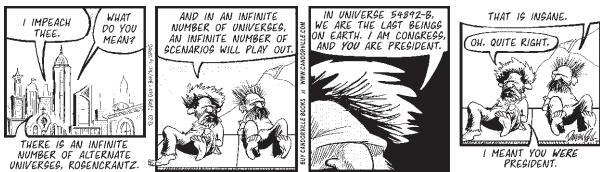
Pearls Before Swine



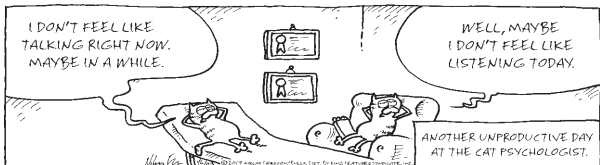
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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ACROSS

- Retired jet
- Pep
- Use the oven
- Spelling or Amos
- Commotion
- Baseball stats
- Power co. supply
- Heavy weight
- Vittles
- Actress Parker
- Sultry Horne
- Dine
- Biblical verb
- Burn like a candle
- Lauder of cosmetics
- Jacob's twin
- Dazzle
- "Toodle-oo!"
- Aerie builder
- America's Cup competitor
- Like some traffic
- "Gosh!"
- Legal wrong
- Edmonton player
- Mentor
- Lass
- Bear lair
- Satin love
- Pub order
- Yale students
- Glazier's sheet

- Badminton barrier
- PC key

DOWN

- Dance move
- Without help
- "chic!"
- Cistern
- Token of immunity on "Survivor"
- "Water Lilies" painter
- Introduces oneself first, say
- Lawyers' org.
- Tool set
- Curvy letter
- Artwork carved from frozen matter
- Guffaw
- Scot's refusal
- Church seat
- Coup d' —
- Head, to Henri
- Get wind of
- Bank charges
- Aspiring atty.'s exam
- "Othello" villain
- Singer Orbison
- Witty one
- Swelled head
- Biz bigwig
- Church keyboard
- Yarn
- 47 In — land
- Satan's forte
- Take five
- Huati
- Actress Thurman
- Harry Potter pal
- Rent out

Answer to Previous Puzzle

O	M	E	G	A		A	S	S	A	M
A	R	A	M	I	S	N	E	E	S	O
C	A	R	O	L	S	T	E	A	T	R
A	C	T	T	E	P	I	D		R	E
S	L	I	M		T	A	G		L	A
T	E	N	E	T		Y	U	L	E	L
				S	I	T		A	D	V
W	A	S	S	A	I	L		S	E	C
A	B	L	Y		G	O		E	A	R
T	A	E		I	R	A	N	I	T	I
T	S	E	T	S	E		E	G	N	O
S	E	V	E	N	S		N	O	M	A
D	E	L	T	S		D	R	A	P	E

12-23

CRYPTOQUIP

XEPHIN UFIMP U FIB LZI

ZUPDX FDEQS U HZECJ UQJ

LUQPX PI SVIL MW VUWEJCB:

"NUJ UFIMP BIMPZ."

Saturday's Cryptoquip: WELL-KNOWN ACTRESS WHO HAS GOTTEN INCREDIBLY SKILLED AT THROWING HORSESHOES: DEBRA RINGER.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals S

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Ernie Gates

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OPINION

A shift toward the realists in the race

By STEPHEN STROMBERG
The Washington Post

LOS ANGELES
For much of the Democratic presidential race, an obstreperous left wing defined the contest. Thursday's debate showed that has changed.

Not long ago, it was unclear whether a Democratic candidate would be viable without embracing progressive activists' demands for "Medicare for All" and the Green New Deal. Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren rose in the polls as she proposed policy after policy, each seemingly more moderate than the last. The race seemed to be slipping into a deadly spiral for the Democratic Party, in which candidates proposed increasingly extreme policies to out-progressive each other.

Instead, those in the race speaking up for realism calculated that the candidates on the left had overreached. They were right. These realists have become more prominent, and they have grown into the spotlight.

As the debate began, Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar offered the best answer on impeachment. Rather than just assuming that those watching agreed that President Donald Trump deserves to be impeached, as the other candidates did, she stayed on point, making the case for indicting the president.

"This is a global Watergate," she explained. "In the case of Watergate, a paranoid president facing election looked for dirt on a political opponent. He did it by getting people to break in. This president did it by calling a foreign leader to look for dirt on a political opponent." She pointed

out that even President Richard M. Nixon allowed his aides to testify, calling on acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney and former national security adviser John Bolton to appear before Congress. Providing detailed and substantive answers delivered with increasing poise, Klobuchar has done better every debate.

Next, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders embarrassed himself by explaining that the trade agreement with Canada and Mexico that Congress is considering would make some small improvements — which is why he is opposing it. Others onstage declined to make perfect the enemy of the good.

Then came the most illustrative philosophical contrast of the evening, on taxes, between Warren and South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg. Moderator Judy Woodruff asked Warren to respond to economists who warn that her plan to enact the biggest tax increase since World War II would hurt the economy.

"Oh, they're just wrong," she said flippantly. Warren argued that investing in education, child care and other government services would help the economy, which is not the point. The question is whether the growth-slowing effects of increasing taxes as high and in the manner she suggests would swamp the stimulative effects of the spending she proposes. Economists — and not just right-wing, partisan economists — have increasingly raised the alarm about Warren's program.

Buttigieg responded: "I think we're being offered a false choice that you either have to go all the way to the extreme or it's business as usual. Yes, we must deliver big ideas and, yes, taxes on wealthy individuals and on corporations are going to have to go up.

"We can also be smart about the promises we're making, make sure they're promises that we can keep without the kind of taxation that economists tell us could hurt the economy.

"It's why, for example, I've proposed that we make college free for 80 percent of Americans. But it doesn't have to be free for the top. If you're in that top 10 percent, how about you pay your own tuition and we save those dollars for something else that we could spend them on that would make a big difference, whether it's infrastructure, child care, housing, health?"

"On issue after issue, we've got to break out of the Washington mindset that measures the bigness of an idea by how many trillions of dollars it adds to the budget or the boldness of an idea by how many fellow Americans it can antagonize."

Klobuchar summed up this approach later on, as the candidates yelled at one another about health care. "You can be progressive and practical at the same time," she said. She should have expanded: It is more progressive to be practical, because, as Buttigieg explained, that is the best way to ensure the government has the resources to invest in progressive priorities.

Former Vice President Joe Biden, the other relative moderate onstage, was more inert. In fact, Buttigieg by far drew the most fire from the other candidates, because of his rising polling numbers in Iowa and New Hampshire. As much as anything else, that is a measure of how the intellectual tenor of the race has shifted toward the realists.

Stephen Stromberg is a Washington Post editorial writer. He specializes in domestic policy, including energy, the environment, legal affairs and public health.

Changing sports landscape seen in MLS' growth

By CONOR SEN
Bloomberg Opinion

Attendance is falling, even in the midst of a strong economy. Perhaps some of that decline can be attributed to the improvement in high-definition broadcasting and the prevalence of large flat-screen televisions, which make watching at home a much better experience than in the past. But that wouldn't explain why TV ratings this season for the National Basketball Association have fallen by double digits, although that might, in part, reflect the continuing decline in the number of subscribers to the cable bundle. Major League Baseball, meanwhile, is looking to eliminate almost a quarter of its minor-league franchises, many of which are in declining or rural communities. Just about the only bright spot on the sports landscape is Major League Soccer, where prospective investors are paying ever-higher fees for the opportunity to get in on the one sport where there's real growth in North America.

Before anyone gets too excited, it's important to note that compared with either the National Football League or the big European soccer leagues, MLS is still in the minor leagues when it comes to revenue. Last year, the NFL grossed more than \$16 billion. MLS is in the neighborhood of about \$1 billion, with the average team pulling in about \$30 million, or roughly 10% as much as the average club in the English Premier League.

Despite this backdrop, expansion fees — the price new ownership groups are paying to join MLS — are soaring. Last

week, MLS said that a group paid a record \$325 million to win the rights to a team in Charlotte, N.C., becoming the 30th team in the league. That compares with the \$70 million fee that Atlanta United paid five years ago.

So what explains the gold rush? Even if attendance and TV ratings for sports are falling, there are a host of reasons that would-be ownership groups are willing to bet on the fortunes of soccer in the U.S.

The first is that pro soccer probably has the potential for more revenue growth in the U.S. than other sports leagues. Maybe MLS will never be as big as the NFL or the English Premier League, but given the changing demographics in the U.S., with young people showing more interest in soccer than older people, it seems inevitable that soccer's popularity and revenues will start catching up with other more lucrative sports leagues.

The second is to consider what can happen to a well-managed new MLS franchise. In 2017, Atlanta United entered MLS in a city that can be a tough sell for pro sports. Yet the team quickly led the league in attendance, playing in front of NFL-size crowds several times a year, and won MLS' U.S. Open Cup Final in its second season in the league. Forbes now says it's the most valuable team in the league, with a value of \$500 million — still a far cry from NFL valuations, where the average team is worth close to \$3 billion, but it shows that there's momentum. Prospective ownership groups now have a data point showing that big-time fan interest and revenue growth justify higher prices for those that want to join MLS.

The third is that there are a dwindling number of potential expansion cities. Major League Baseball and the NBA each have 30 teams (although some cities have more than one team from a single league). The NFL has 32 teams. Before Charlotte was announced as the 30th team in MLS, there was a sense that the window to land an expansion team was closing. If Charlotte hadn't offered an aggressive bid it may well have lost out to Phoenix; Las Vegas; Detroit; Raleigh, N.C.; or any of a handful of other major cities that have yet to gain a team.

There's also the promise that the 2026 World Cup set to be held in North America will be a catalyst for a new phase of growth in U.S. soccer, particularly as millennials become parents of kids who may learn to love and play the game.

Last, it's worth noting how different the league's geographic footprint is compared with that of Major League Baseball, some times still referred to as America's pastime. A third of MLB franchises are in the Midwest, and four of those cities — Milwaukee, Cleveland, Detroit and Pittsburgh — don't have MLS franchises. Neither do Indianapolis or Buffalo, N.Y., two other metro areas that have multiple pro sports franchises. Meanwhile, MLS will have teams entering the league in the next few years in Austin, Texas; Nashville, Tenn.; and Charlotte — where Major League Baseball is absent. Based on geography, this suggests that baseball represents America's past while soccer reflects its future.

Bloomberg Opinion columnist Conor Sen is a portfolio manager for New River Investments in Atlanta and has been a contributor to the Atlantic and Business Insider.

SCOREBOARD/SPORTS BRIEFS

Sports on AFN

Go to the American Forces Network website for the most up-to-date TV schedules. myafn.net

Deals

Saturday's transactions

BASEBALL
American League
DETROIT TIGERS — Designated 1B Brandon Dixon for assignment. Agreed to sell with 2B Jonathan Schoop and 1B CJ. Cron on one-year contracts.
TEXAS RANGERS — Designated RHP Jimmy Heron for assignment.

National League
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Traded OF Aulis Garcia to Texas for cash.
SAN DIEGO PADRES — Announced the retirement of INF Ian Kinsler, who will remain with the club as an adviser to baseball operations.

BASKETBALL
NBA G-LEAGUES — Reacquired C Chris Chiozza.

FOOTBALL
National Football League
CLEVELAND BROWNS — Waived DT Brian Brown. Signed DE Robert Taylor from the practice squad.
PACKERS — Placed OT Josh Nijman on IR. Signed OT John Leung from New Orleans' practice squad.
OAKLAND RAIDERS — Placed LB Marquel Lee on IR. Signed G Lester Cotton Sr. to a one-year contract.

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — Announced the retirement of RB Darren Sproles.
TENNESSEE TITANS — Waived LB Sarif Finch. Signed RB Dalyn Dawkins from the practice squad.

College football

NCAA FCS playoffs

Quarterfinals
Friday, Dec. 13
4 Montana Madison 17, Northern Iowa 0
20 James Madison 24, Austin Peay 10
10 Weber State 17, Montana 10
20 North Dakota State 30, North Dakota 13
20 North Dakota State 42, Montana State 21
14 James Madison 30, Weber State 14
Championship
Saturday, Jan. 11
41 At Toyota Stadium
Frisco, Texas
North Dakota State (15-0) vs. James Madison (14-1)

NCAA Division II playoffs

Semifinals
Saturday, Dec. 14
11 Minnesota State 30, Slippery Rock 15
West Florida 28, Ferris State 14
Championship
Saturday, Dec. 21
41 At McKinney, Texas
West Florida 48 vs. Minnesota State 40

NCAA Division III playoffs

Semifinals
Saturday, Dec. 14
20 North Carolina 45, Middlebury 14
Wisconsin-Whitewater 35, Saint John's (Minn.) 32
Championship
Friday, Dec. 20
41 At Shenandoah, Texas
North Carolina (11-1) vs. Wisconsin-Whitewater 14

NAIA playoffs

Championship
Saturday, Dec. 21
41 At Grambling, La.
Morningside 40, Marian (Ind.) 38

AP spotlight

Dec. 23
1972 — The Pittsburgh Steelers beat the Oakland Raiders 13-7 on Franco Harris' touchdown pass in an AFC Divisional playoff game. The Steelers have 4th-and-10 on their own 40-yard line, with 22 seconds remaining and no time outs. Terry Bradshaw, under pressure, pitches a perfect 40-yard pass. Oakland's 35-yard line which is deflected by a tackle. The Steelers catch the deflection at the Raiders' 43-yard line and run down the left sideline for a touchdown. It's the first touchdown in Steeler franchise history.
The Steelers have five goals and three assists to lead the New York Islanders to a 9-4 victory over the Rangers. The game sets an NHL record with three goals and three assists in the second period.

College basketball

Saturday's men's scores

EAST
Augsburg 90, St. Mary's (Md.) 73
Bentley 74, Felician 64
Boston College 64, California 60
Utah 74, Mass.-Lowell 62
Bryant 64, Dartmouth 60
Buffalo 92, Niagara 72
Carnegie-Mellon 85, Chatham 64
Drexel 53, Norfolk St. 49
East Stroudsburg 83, Mercyhurst 64
Edinboro 88, Kutztown 86, OT
Emory & Henry 74, Skidmore 67
Findlay 75, St. Thomas Aquinas 62
Geneva 58, Goucher 53
Gorham 99, Saint Mary's 71
Harvard 88, George Washington 75
Jefferson 79, Holy Family 54
Johns Hopkins 79, Pitt.-Greensburg 73
La Salle 66, Fairleigh Dickinson 58
Lawrence 63, Husson 60
Loyola (Md.) 72, Elizabethtown 45
Marquette 89, Notre Dame (Ohio) 75
Molloy 76, NYIT 74
Mumfouth (N.J.) 72, Albany (N.Y.) 70
Moravian 55, Immaculate 70
Pace 80, St. New Hampshire 76
Penn 105, Widener 57
Post (Conn.) 82, Concordia (N.Y.) 57
Previdence 70, Texas 46
Richmond 69, Bowling Green 64
Randolph 86, Penn Palitz 73
Rhode Island 86, W. Kentucky 82, OT
Shippensburg 69, Indiana (Pa.) 66
St. Benedict 71
Stony Brook 77, American U. 74
Syracuse 82, North Florida 70
Temple 78, Rider 66
Towson 86, Tulane 82, OT
Villanova 56, Kansas 62
Wagner 82, Army 62

SOUTH
Ala.-Huntsville 75, Spring Hill 55
Alabama 82, Belmont 77
Albany (Ga.) 81, Central St. (Ohio) 76
Appalachian St. 70, Troy 69
Arkansas St. 62, Louisiana-Monroe 59
Auburn 74, Lehigh 51
Charlotte 85, Marist 56
Campbell 82, Johnson & Wales (NC) 59
Catawba 94, Southern Wesleyan 87
Cedarhurst 87, Lynn 80, OT
Clemson 89, Southern 76, E. Kentucky 62
Chattanooga 68, UNC Asheville 64
Coastal Carolina 81, South Alabama 66
Col. of Charleston 73, SC State 61
Duquesne 86, Austin Peay 77
ET 50, Cleveland St. 44
Evans-Riddle 121, Fort Valley St. 85
Florida Gulf Coast 84, St. Thomas (Fla.) 68

Florida Southern 119, American International 84
Florida St. 66, South Florida 60
Florida State 69, UMBC 66
Georgia Southern 77, Texas-Arlington 74
Georgia St. 81, Texas St. 69
High Point 92, Belmont Abbey 66
Liberty 89, Akron 61
Memphis 77, Jackson St. 49
New England 61, Coppin St. 60
Mississippi 83, St. Louisiana 76
Mount Olive 78, Wingate 75
North Carolina 74, UCL 64
Northwestern St. 67, Lamar 61
Oakland 64, Kentucky 66
SC-Upstate 92, Bob Jones 74
St. Cloud 53
Southern Miss. 96, Tougaloo 77
St. Bonaventure 66, Middle Tennessee 56
Stephen F. Austin 81, McNeese 52
Tennessee 75, Jacksonville St. 53
Tennessee State 86, Blue Mountain 71
UAB 71, Alabama 63
UALL 80, Louisiana-Lafayette 66
UNC Greensboro 67, N. Kentucky 50
U.S.F. 82, Florida 64
Vanderbilt 88, UNC Wilmington 73
Vanderbilt 64, Valparaiso 64
W. Carolina 89, Tennessee Tech 76
Wake Forest 86, NC A&T 64
Winthrop 88, Elon 88

MIDWEST
Arkansas 72, Valparaiso 68
Butler 70, Purdue 60
Concordia (Mich.) 89, Kalamazoo 84
DePaul 83, Northwestern 78
Duquesne 86, Earlham 70
Detroit 81, SIU-Edwardsville 55
Eastern Mich. 88, Murray St. 67
Fairfield 61, Oakland 59, OT
Green Bay 88, N. Illinois 84
Indiana 82, Notre Dame 60
Indiana Wesleyan 82, Shawnee St. 75
Kent 83, Cincinnati 70
Kent St. 103, Hampton 64
Lamar 64, Ohio 71, Bradley 55
Marquette 86, Presbyterian 44
Michigan St. 101, E. Michigan 48
Missouri 63, Illinois 55
Missouri Southern 105, Arkansas Tech 58

North Dakota 75, Nebraska 74
Northern St. (SD) 59, Minn. St.-Moorhead 64
Ohio 82, Morehead 58
Ohio State 77, Northern 73, Manchester 66
Omaha 87, Montana 82
S. Indiana 87, King (Tenn.) 57
Ripon 80, N. Michigan 75
St. Francis 88, Missouri Western 75
S. Dakota St. 85, Idaho 57
S. Illinois 64, SE Missouri 45
St. Joseph 87, St. Vincent 88
Saint Louis 66, Kansas 63
St. Mary's 88, Youngstown St. 64
Wright St. 73, Toledo 63

SOUTHWEST
Cent. Arkansas 71, Texas A&M-CC 67
Colorado St. 111, Tulsa 104, OT
Oklahoma 53, UCF 52

Sam Houston St. 87, New Orleans 79
Texas Tech 68, Texas Rio Grande Valley 58

FAR WEST
Drake 85, Air Force 80
Long Beach St. 68, Utah Valley 65
Simon Fraser 58, Colorado Mines 53
Stanford 62, San Diego 59
UNLV 81, Robert Morris 69
Washington St. 87, Incarnate Word 59

Saturday's women's scores

EAST
Alderson-Broadbent 66, WV Wesleyan 61
Assumption 60, Dist. of Columbia 51
Bentley 74, S. New Hampshire 66
Bloomfield 63, Caldwell 61
Boston U. 74, Dartmouth 59
Bridgeport 90, Queens (N.Y.) 62
Bucknell 70, St. Francis (Pa.) 46
CSU 61, Hartford 54
Columbia 99, NIIT 43
Dickinson 77, St. Peter's 71
Gannon 70, Bloomsburg 56
Georgetown 57, Mid-Eastern Shore 39
Goldey Beacom 70, Wilmington (Del.) 69

Grove City 75, Juniata 45
Hofstra 58, Campbell 55
Holy Family 71, Jefferson 64
Immaculate 77, Bryn Athyn 58
Lock Haven 77, PITT.-Johnstown 62
Manfield 62, Clarion 59
Merrimack 73, Mass.-Lowell 50
Molloy 54, NYIT 46
Northeastern 66, Maine 58
Notre Dame (Md.) 83, Penn St.-York 51
Nyack 68, Dominican (N.Y.) 59
Oleonta 43, Colver-Sawyer 36
Post (Conn.) 73, Concordia (N.Y.) 60
Quinnipiac 75, Rhode Island 63
Sciences (Pa.) 62, Chestnut Hill 37
Scranton 100, Rosemont 44
St. Rose 69, Georgian Court 63
Towson 59, Marshall 56
UMass 65, Iona 51
Vermont 73, LIU Brooklyn 62
William 77, La Salle 66

SOUTH
Ablene Christian 59, Nicholls 84
Central St. (Ohio) 66, Albany (Ga.) 56
Charlotte 75, Davidson 64
Dayton 57, St. Francis College 42
Colorado 62, Tulane 52
Francis Marion 81, St. Harris 73
Furman 63, Saint Joseph's 48
Georgia St. 77, SC State 52
Georgia Tech 54, Rice 52
Hampton 69, Richmond 65
Howard 65, FAU 51
Howard 86, George Mason 75
Lynchburg 82, Columbus St. 78
Marshall 65, N. Carolina 63
Miami 74, Wake Forest 51, 68
North Carolina St. 72, ECU 52
North Vernon Nazarene 91, St. Thom. (Fla.) 74

North Alabama 85, SIU-Edwardsville 66
North Georgia 59, UNC Pembroke 45
Old Dominion 85, Mount St. Mary's 34
Presbyterian 74, Breward 45
Salem 68, Ga. Southern 52
Southwestern 52
Sam Houston St. 78, New Orleans 46
St. Francis 88, Clarion 51
Tennessee Tech 78, Lipscomb 58
Virginia Tech 84, Wichita St. 63
UCF 69, Wright St. 59
UNC Asheville 53, Southern U. 34
UNC-Greensboro 82, High Point 70
UNLV 61, South Florida 51
Virginia Tech 84, Wichita St. 63
Wake Forest 73, Florida 68
West Florida 59, Southern Wesleyan 46

MIDWEST
Winthrop 63, W. Carolina 60
Akron 52, Morgan St. 45
Barry 82, Ohio Dominican 66
Belmont 66, E. Kentucky 48
Cincinnati 69, Pittsburgh 53
East Carolina 54, East Carolina 54
Defiance 66, Kalamazoo 46
E. Michigan 84, Detroit 70
Iowa 78, Drake 67
Lebanon 68, UMKC 44
Marquette 53, Belmont 51
Minnesota 77, Lehigh 49
North Dakota 66, Milwaukee 58
North Dakota 72, Lourdes 61
Ohio Christian 88, Rochester (Mich.) 78

Ohio Wesleyan 86, Wayneburg 54
Purdue 81, Bowling Green 74
S. Dakota St. 59, Green Bay 55
SE Missouri 68, Indiana 58
St. Francis 67, St. Vincent 88
West Virginia 63, Michigan St. 57
Xavier 79, Northwestern 59

Arkansas 86, IALR 53
Arkansas 88, IALR 53
SE Louisiana 69, Houston Baptist 59
San Diego St. 57, Incarnate Word 57
Stephen F. Austin 82, McNeese 52
Texas A&M 78, Montana 67
Texas A&M 67, Cent. Arkansas 47
Tulsa 61, Colorado St. 55

FAR WEST
Arizona 61, UC Santa Barbara 42
Cal St.-Fullerton 79, Air Force 70
Colorado St. 68, Portland 61
Kentucky 63, California 61
Long Beach 88, Portland 61
Oregon 89, Kansas St. 51
Saint Mary's (Cal) 72, St. Bonaventure 59

San Diego 59, CS Northridge 40
Franciscan 68, Irvine 61
Santa Clara 90, Fresno St. 66
Southern Cal 57, Long Beach 57
St. Joseph 88, Portland 61
Utah Valley 57, Utah 49
Vanderbilt 76, Washington 74



Adam HUNGER/AP

Pitcher Dallas Keuchel has agreed to a \$55 million, three-year deal with the Chicago White Sox, a person familiar with the negotiations said Saturday.

Briefly

Source: Keuchel joining White Sox

By RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

The Chicago White Sox and left-hander Dallas Keuchel have agreed to a \$55 million, three-year deal, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press.

The person spoke on the condition of anonymity Saturday night because the agreement had not been announced. Keuchel's deal includes a vesting option for 2023 that would bring the total value to \$74 million.

The 31-year-old Keuchel won the AL Cy Young Award with the Houston Astros in 2015 but struggled to find work last offseason as a free agent. He signed a roughly \$13 million, one-year deal with the Atlanta Braves in June and went 8-8 with a 3.75 ERA for the NL East champions.

The long-bearded veteran joins catcher Yasmani Grandal as a big-money addition to the White Sox this offseason. Grandal signed a \$73 million, four-year contract with Chicago last month.

Keuchel and Gonzalez will join a rotation led by All-Star Lucas Giolito that also includes Reynaldo Lopez and Dylan Cease. Promising young right-hander Michael Kopec is also expected to return following Tommy John surgery.

Russia: Whistleblower modified doping data

Russia is blaming the World Anti-Doping Agency's star witness for modifying key laboratory data. His lawyer says that's nonsense.

The Russian Investigative Committee, a major law enforcement agency, alleges that former Moscow anti-doping laboratory director Grigory Rodchenkov remotely changed test results from abroad after fleeing to the United States in 2015.

"All the evidence obtained by the investigation shows that Rodchenkov and unidentified per-

sons intentionally made changes in the electronic database to distort the parameters and indicators of Russian athletes' doping samples," Russian Investigative Committee (IC) spokesman Svetlana Petrenko said in a statement Saturday.

Since leaving Russia, Rodchenkov has become a key witness for WADA, which ruled this month that the doping data — known as the LIMS database — was distorted to protect Russian athletes who failed drug tests while the data was in the custody of the IC.

Rodchenkov's lawyer told the AP the new allegation against his client is a "farce."

"Rodchenkov could not and did not log into the LIMS database," Jim Walden told The Associated Press. "We are not aware of anyone else that logged in. The point is that this is all a charade."

WADA this month banned Russia from next year's Tokyo Olympics over the data manipulation, though Russian athletes can still compete as neutrals.

Scott earns first win in almost four years

GOLD COAST, Australia — Adam Scott sealed his first tournament win in almost four years Sunday when he shot 3-under 69 to win the Australian PGA Championship by two shots.

Scott's win gave him the 30th title of his professional career and his second Australian PGA crown after his win at Royal Pines in 2013. He was edged into second place by compatriot Greg Chalmers in a thrilling seven-hole playoff on the same course in 2014.

Scott's last tournament win came 3 years, 9 months, 16 days ago at the WGC Cadillac Classic in Miami where he beat Bubba Watson by a shot.

His win in front of a home crowd — he has a house close by — completed a solid year and lifted him from 18th to 13th on world rankings.

NBA



SARAH STIER/AP

Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo looks to pass the ball against the Knicks in New York on Saturday. Milwaukee won 123-102.

Roundup

Harden-Westbrook combo rounding into form

Associated Press

PHOENIX — The James Harden-Russell Westbrook combo is starting to become everything the Houston Rockets hoped it would be. The two superstar guards bring different speeds to the offense, and the Phoenix Suns couldn't stop either one Saturday.

"Russell is go, go, go, go, go," Rockets coach Mike D'Antoni said. "When it's half-court, maybe it's James' time."

Harden scored 47 points, Westbrook added 30 and the Rockets rolled to a 139-125 victory over the Suns for their 10th victory in the past 13 games.

Phoenix pulled to 115-107 with 9:37 left but the Rockets responded with a 21-9 run — which included four three-pointers from Harden — that slowly deflated the Suns' players and crowd.

Harden shot 15 of 27 from the field, including 9 of 19 from three-point range. He leads the NBA with 38.5 points per game and blew past that number with his fourth quarter outburst, hitting his quartet of threes in a span of about three minutes.

The former Arizona State star has already scored 1,124 points this season, most for a player through 29 games since Rick Barry had 1,134 in the 1966-67 season. By the end of the night, he received an ovation from a big chunk of the fans.

"This city has shown me so much love before I even got to the NBA," Harden said. "So I feel like it's my job to go out there and put on a show."

Harden's scoring has been a constant throughout the season, but Westbrook's production has spiked in recent weeks. He's averaging 33.7 points, 8.0 rebounds and 6.3 assists over his past three games. The two players took turns dominating on Saturday, hitting Phoenix with waves of offense that couldn't be stopped.

"I don't know if 30 (points) is a benchmark or not, but Russell's playing really well, doing a lot of stuff," D'Antoni said. "And you know James has been playing great."

Giannis has triple-double, Bucks rout hapless Knicks

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Giannis Antetokounmpo had a triple-double, though his brother had the highlight.

And while the NBA MVP wasn't interested in talking about his stats, he certainly was impressed by Thanasis' one basket, a follow slam with his left hand in the fourth quarter.

"That was amazing. That was a crazy dunk. He came out of nowhere," Giannis said.

And the Greek Freak had a good seat on the bench to celebrate it after another easy win for the NBA's top team.

Antetokounmpo had 22 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists in his third triple-double of the season, and the Milwaukee Bucks followed their big victory over the Lakers by routing the New York Knicks 123-102 on Saturday.

Avoiding any lull between two nights after winning a showdown against Los Angeles for the NBA's best record, the Bucks (26-4) made their first six three-pointers to open a big early lead that grew to 29 points.

"Luckily we've got a group that is very professional, very motivated," coach Mike Budenholzer said. "I think they take their work seriously, they take their routine, the process seriously, and I think it reflected coming off a

big win and coming out and playing the way we did in the first quarter."

Antetokounmpo had secured his triple-double by midway through the third quarter after playing just 23 minutes. It appeared for a while that he was going to be finished for the night at that point, but he was eventually called on for some fourth-quarter minutes.

He took only 10 shots, making eight. "I don't look into stats," Antetokounmpo said.

"All I care about is that we came in here, we got the job done. Got another one tomorrow."

Khris Middleton scored 23 points and Kyle Korver had 17 for the Bucks, who are playing without starters Wesley Matthews and Eric Bledsoe because of right leg injuries. They didn't miss them at all.

It wasn't quite as easy as Milwaukee's 132-88 home victory in one of David Fizdale's final games as Knicks coach, but it was plenty good enough to increase the average victory margin for a team that came in leading the league at 12.8 points per game — a figure that would be the highest in NBA history if it stood until the end of the season.

Julius Randle had 20 points and eight rebounds for the Knicks, who lost for the second straight night.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Boston	19	7	—	
Toronto	20	6	7.14	—
Philadelphia	21	5	8.77	1½
Brooklyn	16	11	55.2	4½
New York	7	23	23.3	14

Southeast Division

Miami	21	8	7.24	—
Orlando	11	18	44.4	9
Charlotte	13	19	40.6	9½
Washington	8	26	28.1	14
Atlanta	6	24	20.0	15½

Central Division

Milwaukee	26	4	8.67	—
Indiana	12	19	38.7	5½
Chicago	19	12	61.1	1
Detroit	11	19	36.7	15
Cleveland	8	21	27.6	17½

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	20	9	.690	—
Dallas	19	9	.679	½
San Antonio	11	17	.393	8½
Memphis	11	19	.367	9½
New Orleans	7	23	.233	13½

Northwest Division

Denver	19	8	70.4	—
Utah	18	11	62.1	2
Oklahoma City	14	14	50.0	5½
Portland	14	16	46.7	6½
Minnesota	10	18	35.7	9½

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	24	5	82.8	—
L.A. Clippers	22	9	71.0	3
Golden State	19	12	61.4	12
Phoenix	11	18	37.9	13
Golden State	6	24	20.0	18½

Friday's games

Cleveland 114, Memphis 107	
Orlando 119, Sacramento 105	
Boston 114, Detroit 93	
Phoenix 122, Washington 118	
Dallas 117, Philadelphia 98	
Atlanta 129, New York 114	
Oklahoma City 126, Phoenix 108	
Denver 109, Minnesota 100	
Portland 118, Orlando 103	
Golden State 106, New Orleans 102	

Saturday's games

Utah 114, Charlotte 107	
Brooklyn 122, Atlanta 112	
Chicago 119, Detroit 107	
Philadelphia 125, Washington 108	
Milwaukee 123, New York 102	
Memphis 119, Sacramento 115	
L.A. Clippers 134, San Antonio 109	
Houston 139, Phoenix 125	
Portland 113, Minnesota 106	

Sunday's games

Dallas at Toronto	
Charlotte at Boston	
Indiana at Milwaukee	
L.A. Clippers at Oklahoma City	
Denver at L.A. Lakers	

Monday's games

Atlanta at Cleveland	
Chicago at Orlando	
Philadelphia at Detroit	
Toronto at Indiana	
Washington at New York	
Utah at Miami	
San Antonio at Memphis	
Denver at Phoenix	
Houston at Sacramento	
New Orleans at Portland	
Minnesota at Golden State	

Tuesday's games

No games scheduled	
Wednesday's games	
Boston at Toronto	
Milwaukee at Philadelphia	
Houston at Golden State	
L.A. Clippers at L.A. Lakers	
New Orleans at Denver	

Calendar

Jan. 10 — All contracts guaranteed for rest of season.
Feb. 6 — Trade deadline (3 p.m. EST)
Feb. 14-16 — All-Star weekend, Chicago.
April 15 — Regular season ends.
April 18 — Playoffs begin.
May 19 — Draft lottery, Chicago.
May 21-24 — Draft combine, Chicago.
June 4 — NBA Finals begin.
June 25 — NBA Draft.

Leaders

Scoring				
G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Harden, HOU	29	124	459	15.8
Antetokounmpo, MIL	29	336	188	91.1
Sabonis, IND	25	100	262	10.4
Young, ATL	29	276	190	84.1
Beal, WAS	29	211	181	79.0
Rebounds				
G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Drummond, DET	28	128	156	16.3
Capela, HOU	25	101	263	14.6
Sabonis, IND	25	100	262	14.5
Whiteside, POR	27	100	262	13.41
Sabonis, IND	24	91	265	13.19
Assists				
G	AST	AVG		
James, LAL	23	217	9.4	
Rubio, PHX	26	212	8.1	
Drummond, DET	29	244	8.4	
Simmons, PHI	19	238	8.2	
Steals				
G	STL	AVG		
Simmons, PHI	25	53	2.12	
Butler, MIA	28	56	2.0	
Drummond, DET	31	62	2.0	
Dunn, CHI	23	45	1.96	
VanVleet, TOR	20	43	2.15	
Blocks				
G	BLK	AVG		
Whiteside, POR	27	71	2.63	
Davis, LAL	22	62	2.56	
Lopez, MIL	28	68	2.43	
Turner, IND	21	49	2.33	

Rockets guard Russell Westbrook loses the ball while being defended by Suns forward Mikal Bridges, right, on Saturday in Phoenix. Houston won 129-125.

76ers 125, Wizards 108: Joel Embiid had 21 points and 13 rebounds and Josh Richardson added 21 points to lead Philadelphia over visiting Washington.	The Pistons were without Blake Griffin and Derrick Rose, and the Bulls pulled away late thanks to LaVine's outside shooting. He and White made five three-pointers apiece.
Ben Simmons had 14 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds for the 76ers, who snapped a three-game losing streak overall and a two-game skid at home.	Trail Blazers 113, Timberwolves 106: Damian Lillard scored 29 points, Hassan Whiteside had 16 points, 22 rebounds and seven blocks, and Portland defeated visiting Minnesota.
Clippers 134, Spurs 109: Los Angeles forward Kawhi Leonard had 26 points, nine assists and seven rebounds in three quarters and won in San Antonio for the first time since leaving the franchise.	Jazz 114, Hornets 107: Bojan Bogdanovic scored 26 points, Rudy Gobert had 17 points and 19 rebounds and Utah beat host Charlotte for its fifth straight victory.
Leonard was 11-for-16 from the field with four steals and two turnovers in setting a hurried pace the Spurs were unable to match.	Grizzlies 119, Kings 115: Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 18 points, Jae Crowder added 17 points and 10 rebounds, and Memphis beat visiting Sacramento.
Bulls 119, Pistons 107: Zach LaVine scored 33 points and Coby White added 19 to help Chicago outlast short-handed host Detroit.	

ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

COLLEGE BASKETBALL ROUNDUP

Late three helps Villanova top No. 1 Kansas

Jayhawks are fifth top-ranked team to fall this season

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Jermaine Samuels spotted up, let the ball fly and — bang — the three-pointer swished, and some 20,000 delirious Villanova fans shook the arena. With time running out, the game on the line, Samuels was fearless.

"I just shot it unconsciously," he said. He did, and one more No. 1 got KO'd. Kansas became the latest top-ranked team to fall in the wildest of basketball seasons, another week where it's no fun at No. 1.

Samuels hit the winner with 20.5 seconds left to lead the No. 18 Wildcats to a 56-55 victory on Saturday, and Villanova became the only team to beat KU twice at No. 1 under coach Bill Self.

"The reason why No. 1 lost today is because they played a team that's really good in their building," Self said. "I don't think it had anything to do with what anybody is ranked."

Tell that to those who believe something is in the air at the top of the poll.

Philadelphia 76ers All-Star center and former Jayhawk Joel Embiid looked forlorn as he walked past the Wildcats cheerleaders. He popped in the KU locker room and told the team, "keep trying."

"Profound words of wisdom," Self cracked.

At this pace, the Big 12 Jayhawks (9-2) may get another run at No. 1. Kansas had moved up one spot to become the fifth team to top the poll this season. It is the first time the AP poll has had five different No. 1s before New Year's Day; the record for an entire season is seven, set in 1982-83.

Get ready for a sixth when the Top 25 is released Monday.

"It's just one of those years," Villanova coach Jay Wright said. "There just isn't one team that's dominant."

Unlike Duke and Louisville, which lost to unranked teams, KU lost to a traditional national power that has had its number in recent seasons. The Wildcats (9-2) finally nudged ahead in a back-and-forth game in the final minute.

No. 2 Gonzaga 112, Eastern Washington 77: Filip Petrushev had 24 points and nine rebounds to help the host Bulldogs beat the Eagles, clearing a path to become the sixth top-ranked team in the nation so



MATT SLOCUM/AP

Villanova's Saddiq Bey, right, tries to knock the ball away from Kansas' David McCormack during Villanova's 56-55 upset of No. 1 Kansas Saturday in Philadelphia.

far this season.

Gonzaga has reached No. 1 several times in recent years, including twice last season.

Admon Gilder scored 22 points and Ryan Woolridge added 15 points for the Bulldogs (13-1), who have won five straight games since falling to Michigan in the title game of the Battle 4 Atlantic. Gonzaga has won 30 straight home games, the longest streak in the nation.

No. 5 Ohio State 71, No. 6 Kentucky 65: D.J. Carton had 13 points, Caleb Wesson added 12 before fouling out and the Buckeyes outlasted the Wildcats in the CBS Sports Classic in Las Vegas.

Ohio State (11-1) played with Duane Washington Jr., its second-leading scorer, limited to eight minutes due to a rib injury and had a hard time shaking Kentucky in a physical game.

The Wildcats (8-3) stayed within reach despite a poor-shooting second half before the Buckeyes stretched the lead to seven with 1:17 left. Ohio State made four straight free throws in the final 18 seconds to hold off Kentucky from mounting a comeback.

No. 8 Oregon 84, Texas Southern 78: Payton Pritchard led a late surge to help the host Ducks escape an upset scare.

Pritchard scored 29 points, 16 of them in the final 4:44 as Oregon (10-2) finally got the lead and held it. Will Richardson added 18 points.

No. 11 Memphis 77, Jackson State 49: Precious Achiuwa had 20 points and nine rebounds and DJ Jeffries added 13 points to help host Memphis beat Jackson

State.

Memphis (10-1) weathered 28 turnovers by shooting 55% when it wasn't throwing away the ball or mishandling passes. The teams combined for 53 turnovers.

No. 12 Auburn 74, Lehigh 51: Austin Wiley had 14 points and 15 rebounds for the host Tigers, at 11-0 the only unbeaten Power Five program and one of four undefeated teams in the country.

Auburn led 27-20 at the half and pulled away from there. J'Von McCormick scored 18 points, hitting three straight three-pointers to put the game away.

Colorado 78, No. 13 Dayton 76 (OT): D'shawn Schwartz nailed a three-pointer at the buzzer, McKinley Wright IV scored a season-high 29 points and the Buffaloes beat the Flyers in Chicago.

Colorado (10-2) trailed by 14 in the first half, led by eight in the second and came away with the win after Ovi Toppin hit a tying three in the final seconds of regulation for Dayton (9-2).

No. 14 Michigan 86, Presbyterian 44: Jon Teske scored 11 of his 15 points in the first half and the host Wolverines cruised past the Blue Hose despite losing Isaiah Livers to an apparent injury.

Michigan (9-3) snapped a two-game losing streak and took full advantage of an easier spot on the schedule. It raced to a 17-4 advantage and led 38-15 at halftime.

No. 15 Michigan State 101, Eastern Michigan 48: Cassius Winston had 21 points and seven assists for the host Spartans.

Michigan State (9-3) has won four

straight and may keep rolling if its supporting cast can gain confidence after solid performances. Foster Loyer scored a season-high 13 points, Aaron Henry had 12 points, Xavier Tillman scored 11 and Marcus Bingham had 10 points.

St. John's 70, No. 16 Arizona 67: Nick Rutherford scored the go-ahead basket on a driving layup with 1:03 remaining and the Red Storm beat the Wildcats in the Al Atlis Classic in San Francisco despite blowing a 15-point lead in the second half. LJ Figueroa had 21 points and Rasheem Dunn added 14 to help St. John's (11-2) win its seventh straight game. The last two have come without injured scoring leader Mustapha Heron.

No. 17 Butler 70, Purdue 61: Bryce Golden scored 14 points and the host Bulldogs used relentless defense to pull away from the Boilermakers in the Crossroads Classic.

Butler (11-1) has won two straight since losing at No. 11 Baylor.

No. 19 Florida State 66, South Florida 60: The Seminoles used smothering defense to overcome a 10-point deficit in the final seven minutes and beat the Bulls in the Orange Bowl Classic in Sunrise, Fla.

FSU (10-2) forced 24 turnovers, including seven as it outscored South Florida 19-3 down the stretch. The Seminoles forced four shot-clock violations and won despite being outrebounced by 14 and shooting only 40%, including 7-for-27 from three-point range.

No. 20 San Diego State 80, Utah 52: Malachi Flynn scored 16 points and the Aztecs remained one of the nation's four unbeaten teams with the victory over the Utes in the Basketball Hall of Fame Classic in Los Angeles.

No. 21 Tennessee 75, Jacksonville State 53: Jordan Bowen scored 19 points and the host Volunteers gave coach Rick Barnes his 700th career victory.

No. 24 Texas Tech 68, Texas-Rio Grande Valley 58: Freshman Jahmi'us Ramsey scored 15 points in his return after missing four games with a hamstring injury, and the host Red Raiders overcame another sluggish start.

No. 25 West Virginia 75, Youngstown State 64: Oscar Tshiebwe scored 19 points and Derek Culver added 15 for the visiting Mountaineers.

Drake 85, Air Force 80: Ryan Swan scored a season-high 24 points for the host Falcons (6-7) in a losing effort. Roman Penn had a career-high 22 points to lead the Bulldogs (10-3).

Wagner 82, Army 62: Alex Morales had a season-high 21 points as the host Seahawks easily defeated the Black Knights.

Alex King had 15 points for Army (5-6).

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Roundup

Ducks edge Isles in shootout

Anaheim's Silfverberg scores twice, including the shootout winner

Associated Press

UNIONDALE, N.Y. — Jakob Silfverberg scored in regulation and added the shootout winner in the Anaheim Ducks' 6-5 win against the New York Islanders on Saturday.

Adam Henrique had a goal and an assist, John Gibson made 28 saves as the Ducks snapped a two-game skid. Max Comtois, Sam Carrick and Cam Fowler also scored for Anaheim.

Anders Lee, Brock Nelson and Mathew Barzal each had a goal and an assist while Semyon Varlamov made 23 saves as the Islanders fell for the second time in three games. Nick Leddy had a goal and two assists, and Jordan Eberle and Derick Brassard each added two assists.

Ryan Pulock tied the game at 5-5 when he blasted a slap shot past Gibson at 13:19 of the third period.

Sabres 3, Kings 2: Rasmus Ristolainen and Marco Scandella scored to help Buffalo end a three-game skid.

Victor Olosson also scored and Linus Ulund stopped 25 shots as the Sabres bounced back from a 6-1 loss to the Philadelphia Flyers on Thursday and improved to 17-13-7.

Andrew Kempe and Dustin Brown scored for Los Angeles. Jonathan Quick finished with 25 saves.

Jets 3, Wild 0: Blake Wheeler had a goal and assist to become the leading scorer in franchise history, and Connor Hellebyuk made 31 saves for his third shutout of the season to lead Winnipeg to a win at Minnesota.

Wheeler's 616 points surpassed the previous mark set by Ilya Kovalchuk, who played for the franchise when it was the Atlanta Thrashers.

Patrick Laune had two goals for the Jets, who had lost three of their past four games. Mark Scheifele scored for the eighth time in nine games, and Nikolaj Ehlers and Logan Shaw also had goals.

Alex Stalock allowed six goals on 28 shots in a goal for the Wild before being removed midway through third period. Devan Dwyer finished with two saves for Minnesota, which has lost three of four.

Capitals 3, Lightning 1: Dmitry Orlov scored the go-ahead goal with 6:03 left, Braden Holtby made 26 saves and noted Washington killed off several late power plays to beat Tampa Bay.

The Capitals outshot the Lightning 35-27 and handed them their third loss in four games. Holtby didn't get tested much in the first two periods but was at his best on a late 5-on-3 penalty kill when he made big stops on Tyler Johnson and Victor Hedman.

Defenceman Radko Gudas scored his first goal with Wash-



Jim McIsaac/AP

Anaheim Ducks right wing Jakob Silfverberg, front, celebrates his second-period goal with his teammates during the Ducks' 6-5 shootout win at the New York Islanders on Saturday.

ington, and Nic Dowd added an empty-netter. The NHL-leading Capitals improved to 5-0-1 in the second half of back-to-backs this season.

Reigning MVP Nikita Kucherov scored his 12th of the season for Tampa Bay, and Curtis McElhinney finished with 32 saves.

Predators 4, Bruins 3 (OT): Ryan Ellis scored with 54.2 seconds left on the clock in overtime to lift Nashville to a win at stumbling Boston. Roman Josi had two goals, Filip Forsberg also scored and Pekka Rinne stopped 29 shots to help the Predators finish a four-game road trip at 3-0-1.

Patrice Bergeron scored twice and Par Lindholm had the other goal for the Bruins, who have won just once in their last eight games (1-5-2). Jaroslav Halak finished with 25 saves.

Ellis beat Halak with a wristshot from the bottom of the left circle for the winner after getting a pass from Ryan Johansen.

Flyers 5, Senators 4 (SO): Sean Couturier scored the shoot-out winner to lift Philadelphia to a win at Ottawa. James van Riemsdyk had two goals in regulation to lead the Flyers. Kevin Hayes and Jakub Voracek also scored, and Brian Elliott made 30 saves.

Tyler Ennis scored twice and Mark Borowiecki and Anthony Duclair added goals for the Senators. Marcus Hogberg stopped 34 shots in his third straight start. Anders Nilsson missed his second game with a concussion and Craig Anderson was not ready to return from a knee injury, but he did serve as the backup.

Panthers 4, Hurricanes 2: Jonathan Huberdeau had a goal and an assist in the third period, Chris Driedger stopped 42 shots, and visiting Florida won its third

straight.

Brian Biele, Evgenii Dadanov, and Noel Acciari also scored for the Panthers. Driedger won for the second time in three starts this season.

Nino Niederreiter and Lucas Wallmark scored for Carolina, which lost in regulation for the first time in eight games. Petr Mrazek finished with 18 saves.

Maple Leafs 4, Red Wings 1: Michael Hutchinson made 29 saves in his first win of the season and host Toronto got its fourth straight win.

Jach Hyman and Auston Matthews each had two goals and an assist for the Maple Leafs, who won with their backup for the first time this season.

Tyler Bertuzzi scored for the Red Wings, who have lost 15 of 17.

Blue Jackets 5, Devils 1: Oliver Bjorkstrand scored twice in the first period, Jonas Korpisalo stopped 21 shots and host Columbus cruised past New Jersey.

Vladislav Gavrikov, Zach Werenski and Gustav Nyquist also scored for the Blue Jackets, who won their fourth straight despite being ravaged by injuries. They have earned at least one point in a season-high seven consecutive games (5-0-2).

Will Butcher scored for the Devils and Gilles Senn, starting his first NHL game, made 34 saves.

Oilers 4, Canadiens 3: Riley Sheahan got the tiebreaking goal in the third period, lifting host Edmonton past Montreal.

Leon Draisaitl, Connor McDavid and Josh Archibald each had a goal and an assist to help the Oilers snap a two-game skid and win for just the second time in eight games (2-5-1). Mikko Koskinen stopped 25 shots.

Jeff Petry, Philip Danault and Max Domi scored for the Canadiens, who had won two straight. Carey Price had 22 saves.

Blackhawks 5, Avalanche 3: Dominik Kubalik scored the go-ahead goal with 3:17 left and Chicago rallied to win at Colorado.

Patrick Kane and Kirby Dach scored 28 seconds apart in the Blackhawks' four-goal third period, and Jonathan Toews had a goal and two assists to help the Blackhawks salvage the finale of their four-game season series with the Avalanche.

Kane and Kubalik also had assists for Chicago. Robin Lehner stopped 28 shots for Detroit.

Penguins 4, Capitals 1: Jake Virtanen and J.T. Miller scored power-play goals in the first period to lead host Vancouver over Pittsburgh.

Elias Pettersson and Brock Boeser also scored for the Canucks. Tyler Myers had two assists, and Jacob Markstrom made 28 saves. Jake Guentzel scored for Pittsburgh.



Josie Lef/AP

St. Louis Blues left wing Jaden Schwartz, left, goaltender Jake Allen and defenseman Robert Bortuzzo, right, celebrate the team's 5-2 win over the San Jose Sharks Saturday in San Jose.

Pietrangelo paces Blues past Sharks

By GIDEON RUBIN

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — On a night the St. Louis Blues didn't bring their best game, the defending Stanley Cup champions found a way to grind out a win.

Alex Pietrangelo scored twice in the third period, Jake Allen had 34 saves and the Blues beat the San Jose Sharks 5-2 Saturday night in a rematch of last season's Western Conference finals.

"This group, we just find a way to win," Pietrangelo said. "It's never easy coming over to the West Coast the day before and sometimes you don't have your legs and I didn't think we did today, but we just found a way."

Pietrangelo finished a 2-on-1 with a shot past Martin Jones for a 3-2 lead with 8:53 left. Pietrangelo and Ryan O'Reilly each added empty-net goals.

Jaden Schwartz scored and Arizona won the game, who also scored for the Blues, who won their fifth straight and improved to 16-2-3 against Western Conference opponents.

"It's character and leadership, that's a big part of it for sure," Blues coach Craig Berube said. "They know how to hang in there and then when the time comes, they push and they win games. We're not always going to have our best stuff, so it's important that you find ways to win those games."

Brent Burns and newly acquired forward Stefan Noesen each scored for San Jose, which has lost eight of nine and three of four since Bob Boughner took over as interim coach after the Sharks fired Peter DeBoer.

The Sharks trailed 2-1 late in the second when Noesen scored in his San Jose debut. Noesen, who the Sharks claimed off waivers from the Pittsburgh Penguins on Thursday, took a shot after a long pass from Brendan Dillon.

St. Louis went up 2-1 at 5:30 of the second period on Schwartz's power-play goal.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	37	21	7	9	51	123	97
Florida	35	18	12	5	41	126	115
Dallas	36	22	11	3	47	127	100
Montreal	36	17	13	6	40	115	115
Tampa Bay	34	17	13	4	38	110	108
Ottawa	35	18	14	3	39	103	122
Detroit	37	9	25	3	31	80	145

Metropolitan Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	37	26	6	5	57	134	104
N.Y. Islanders	37	23	8	4	49	103	88
Columbus	36	22	12	2	46	118	94
Pittsburgh	36	21	11	4	44	102	96
Philadelphia	36	22	11	3	45	116	105
Columbus	36	16	14	6	38	95	104
N.Y. Rangers	35	16	14	4	36	108	112
New Jersey	35	11	19	5	27	84	127

Western Conference

Central Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
St. Louis	37	23	8	6	52	114	98
Colorado	36	22	11	3	47	127	100
Minnesota	36	21	13	2	44	111	101
San Jose	36	15	17	4	34	99	92
Nashville	35	17	12	6	40	123	114
Chicago	37	17	15	5	39	115	126
Arizona	37	15	16	6	36	104	118

Pacific Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	38	19	13	6	44	116	110
San Jose	39	20	15	4	44	115	120
Calgary	37	18	14	5	41	99	112
Vancouver	37	18	15	4	40	120	113
Edmonton	36	15	17	4	34	95	109
San Jose	37	16	19	2	34	100	130
Minnesota	38	15	19	4	34	120	120

Notes: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild-card teams per conference advance to playoffs.

Buffalo 3, Los Angeles 2
Anaheim 5, N.Y. Islanders 5, SO
Winnipeg 6, Minnesota 0
Nashville 4, Boston 3, OT
Washington 3, Tampa Bay 1
Columbus 5, New Jersey 1
Edmonton 4, Pittsburgh 1
Philadelphia 5, Ottawa 4, SO
Chicago 4, Detroit 1
San Jose 5, Colorado 3

Saturday's games
Anaheim at N.Y. Rangers
Calgary at Dallas
Arizona at San Jose
Vegas at San Jose

Sunday's games
Carolina at Toronto
Calgary at Minnesota
Washington at Boston
Columbus at N.Y. Islanders
St. Louis at Philadelphia
Florida at Tampa Bay
Dallas at Ottawa
Arizona at Nashville
Montreal at Winnipeg
New Jersey at Chicago
St. Louis at Los Angeles
Edmonton at Vancouver
Colorado at Vegas

Tuesday's games
No games scheduled
Wednesday's games
No games scheduled

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Bowl Glance

Friday, Dec. 20
Bahamas Bowl
 Nassau
 Buffalo 31, Charlotte 9
Frisco (Texas) Bowl
 Kent St. 41, Utah St. 41
Saturday, Dec. 21
Celebration Bowl
 At Atlanta
 NC A&T 64, Alcorn State 44
New Mexico Bowl
 Albuquerque
 San Diego State 48, Central Michigan 11
Cure Bowl
 Orlando, Fla.
 Liberty 23, Georgia Southern 16
Boca Raton (Fla.) Bowl
 FAU 52, SMU 28
Camellia Bowl
 Montgomery, Ala.
 Arkansas St. 34, FIU 26
Las Vegas Bowl
 Washington St. 38, Boise St. 7
New Orleans Bowl
 Appalachian State 31, UAB 17
Monday, Dec. 23
Gasparrilla Bowl
 At Tampa, Fla.
 UCF (9-3) vs. Marshall (8-4)
Tuesday, Dec. 24
Hawaii Bowl
 Honolulu
 BYU (7-5) vs. Hawaii (9-5)
Thursday, Dec. 26
Independence Bowl
 Shreveport, La.
 Miami (6-6) vs. Louisiana Tech (9-3)
Quick Lane Bowl
 Detroit
 Pittsburgh (7-5) vs. Eastern Michigan (6-6)
Friday, Dec. 27
Military Bowl
 Annapolis, Md.
 North Carolina (6-6) vs. Temple (8-4)
Pinstripe Bowl
 New York
 Wake Forest (8-4) vs. Michigan State (6-6)
Texas Bowl
 Houston
 Oklahoma State (8-4) vs. Texas A&M (7-5)
Holiday Bowl
 San Diego
 Iowa (9-3) vs. Southern Cal (8-4)
Cheez-it Bowl
 Phoenix
 Air Force (10-2) vs. Washington State (6-6)
Saturday, Dec. 28
Camping World Bowl
 Orlando, Fla.
 Notre Dame (10-2) vs. Iowa State (7-5)
Cotton Bowl Classic
 Arlington, Texas
 Penn State (10-2) vs. Memphis (12-1)
Peach Bowl
 Atlanta
 LSU (13-0) vs. Oklahoma (12-1)
CFP Semifinal
 Glendale, Ariz.
CFP Semifinal
 Ohio State (13-0) vs. Clemson (13-0)
Saturday, Dec. 30
SERVPRO First Responder Bowl
 Dallas
 Western Kentucky (7-5) vs. Western Michigan (7-5)
Music City Bowl
 Nashville, Tenn.
 Mississippi State (6-6) vs. Louisville (7-5)
Redbox Bowl
 Santa Clara, Calif.
 Illinois (6-6) vs. California (7-5)
Orange Bowl
 Miami Gardens, Fla.
 Florida (10-2) vs. Virginia (9-4)
Tuesday, Dec. 31
Belk Bowl
 Charlotte, N.C.
 Kentucky (7-5) vs. Finia Tech (8-4)
Sun Bowl
 El Paso, Texas
 Florida State (6-6) vs. Arizona State (7-5)
Liberty Bowl
 Memphis, Tenn.
 Kansas State (8-4) vs. Navy (9-2)
Arizona Bowl
 Tucson, Ariz.
 Wyoming (7-5) vs. Georgia State (7-5)
Alamo Bowl
 San Antonio
 Texas (7-5) vs. Utah (11-2)
Wednesday, Jan. 1
Citrus Bowl
 Orlando, Fla.
 Michigan (9-3) vs. Alabama (10-2)
Outback Bowl
 Tampa, Fla.
 Minnesota (10-2) vs. Auburn (9-3)
Rose Bowl
 Pasadena, Calif.
 Oregon (11-2) vs. Wisconsin (10-3)
Sugar Bowl
 New Orleans
Thursday, Jan. 2
Birmingham (Ala.) Bowl
 Cincinnati (10-3) vs. Boston College (6-6)
Gator Bowl
 Jacksonville, Fla.
 Indiana (8-4) vs. Tennessee (7-5)
Friday, Jan. 3
Famous Idaho Potato Bowl
 Boise
 Ohio (6-6) vs. Nevada (7-5)
Saturday, Jan. 4
Armed Forces Bowl
 Fort Worth, Texas
 Southern Miss (7-5) vs. Tulane (6-6)
Landmark Bowl
 Mobile, Ala.
 Miami (OH) (8-5) vs. Louisiana-Lafayette (10-3)
Munday, Jan. 13
College Football Championship
 New Orleans
 Peach Bowl winner vs. Fiesta Bowl winner

Bowl roundup

Washington routs No. 18 Boise State

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — The Las Vegas Bowl was always going to be about Chris Petersen. It was his final game as coach, a matchup of the two programs he led to such great heights in Washington and Boise State.

It could have been his moment, but the humble Petersen went out of his way to share his last spotlight after a successful finale.

Jacob Eason threw for 210 yards and a touchdown, Elijah Molden was named MVP after intercepting a pass and forcing a fumble, and the Huskies sent out Petersen with a 38-7 victory over the No. 18 Broncos on Saturday night.

"Well, this is never about any one person. It's never about any one player. It's a team game," Petersen said.

That was certainly true as Petersen capped six seasons as Washington's coach and 14 years as one of the most successful leaders in college football.

Richard Newton rushed for 69 yards with a short touchdown run and threw a touchdown pass for the Huskies (8-5), and Salvon Ahmed added two touchdowns runs. Myles Bryant added an interception, and six different defenders had a tackle for loss.

Together, they capped an erratic season with a dominant finale for Petersen — who left Boise State to coach Washington — after he announced Dec. 2 he was stepping down after six seasons. Defensive coordinator Jimmy Lake will take over as head coach.

San Diego State 48, Central Michigan 11: Ryan Agnew passed for 287 yards and three touchdowns, Jesse Matthews caught three passes for 111 yards and two touchdowns and the Aztecs went with a bowl game for the first time since 2016, beating the Chipewas in the New Mexico Bowl in Albuquerque.

Jordan Byrd ran for a career-



STEVE MARCUS/AP

Washington coach Chris Petersen is doused after his team's 38-7 defeat of Boise State in the Las Vegas Bowl on Saturday.

high 139 yards and a touchdown to help San Diego State (10-3) cap its 10th straight bowl appearance with a victory. The Aztecs opened the season 7-1, then dropped two of their last three conference games to fall out of contention for a Mountain West title berth.

It was a homecoming for San Diego State coach Rocky Long. He last won the New Mexico Bowl in 2007 as New Mexico's coach.

The Aztecs prevented Central Michigan (8-6) from sustaining consistent drives, with quarterback Quinten Dormady under pressure and forced to throw into tight coverage. He passed for 164 and threw three interceptions. The Chipewas' Jonathan Ward, who came into the game with 1,082 yards and 15 touchdowns, was held to 7 rushing yards and 26 yards receiving.

Florida Atlantic 52, SMU 28: Chris Robison passed for 305 yards and two touchdowns and the Owls scored two touchdowns in a 24-second pass late in the first half to take control in the Boca Raton Bowl.

It was FAU's first game since Lane Kiffin left the Owls to take over at Ole Miss — and the Conference USA champions, playing on their home field, didn't miss a beat under interim coach Glenn Spencer.

James Charles ran for two touchdowns for the Owls (11-3), who tied a school record for wins in a season and improved to 4-0 in bowl games. Rashad Smith ran a fumble back for a score in the third quarter to help FAU blow the game open. Brandon Robison completed 27 of 37 passes for the Owls.

Shane Buchele completed 27 for 47 passes for 303 yards for the Mustangs (10-3).

Arkansas State 34, Florida International 26: Layne Hatcher passed for 393 yards and four touchdowns, including a late 13-yarder to Jonathan Adams, and the Red Wolves beat the Panthers in the Camellia Bowl in Montgomery, Ala.

Arkansas State (8-5) came back to life offensively for a final big drive, highlighted by All-

American and game MVP Omar Bayless's 52-yard catch down to the 12. Then they had two interceptions in the final minutes.

Florida International (6-7) converted a fourth-and-5 play with a pass to Austin Maloney, who matched the huge game of Bayless. But James Morgan's overthrow on the next play was intercepted by Jeremy Smith, who returned it 21 yards into FIU territory.

Liberty 23, Georgia Southern 16: Frankie Hickson ran for 120 yards on 22 carries, Stephen Calvert went 16-for-35 passing for 270 yards and two touchdowns in the Flames' Cure Bowl victory in Orlando.

Liberty coach Hugh Freeze, who began his first season coaching the Flames from a hospital bed in the press box following back surgery Aug. 16, got his 50th career victory. Liberty (8-5) joined Georgia Southern and Appalachian State as the only teams to move from FCS to FBS and win a bowl game in its first season of eligibility. The Eagles finished 7-6.

No. 20 Appalachian State 31, UAB 17: Darrynton Evans ran for 157 yards, including a 31-yard touchdown after he scooped up a fourth-down fumble, in the Mountaineers' win in the New Orleans Bowl.

Appalachian State (13-1) scored twice in the third quarter on quarterback fumbles.

Evans' go-ahead score came first when Zach Thomas lost the ball on a fourth-and-1 sneak. Later, outside linebacker Nick Hampton stripped Blazers quarterback Tyler Johnston, and inside linebacker Trey Cobb picked it up and returned the ball 24 yards to put the Mountaineers in front 24-17.

Johnston, passed for 298 yards and two touchdowns for UAB (9-5) in his first start since injuring his knee Nov. 2 at Tennessee.

FCS semifinals roundup

Bison, 2-time defending champion, back in title game

Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. — In just seconds a dynasty that appeared vulnerable became unbeatable.

Christian Watson scored long touchdowns on back-to-back touches early in the second quarter and two-time defending FCS champion North Dakota State blitzed Montana State 42-14 in a semifinal on Saturday for its 36th straight victory.

"It was a crazy experience out there today," Watson said after gaining 86 yards on three runs and 88 on two receptions.

Trey Lance found Watson behind the defense along the left sideline for a 75-yard touchdown one play after the Bobcats tied the game at 7. After a three-and-out by Montana State, Watson went 70 yards on a reverse. Both plays took 10 seconds and came less than two minutes apart.

"Explosive," Lance said. "Anytime he gets the ball in his hands, I'm not catching him. I don't know if a lot of guys are going to catch him. This dude, he can turn on the burners. He's really explosive with the ball in his hands."

Lance threw for three touchdowns, including a 73-yard hookup with Dimitri Williams, and scored two rushing touchdowns.

The top-seeded Bison (15-0) were in the semifinals for the ninth straight year. They have now won eight with the previous seven bringing national titles. North Dakota State faces second-seeded James Madison on Jan. 11 in the championship in Frisco, Texas.

James Madison 30, Weber State 14: Ben DiNucci and the host Dukes didn't want to leave anything to chance.

A week after its high-scoring offense was limited to 17 points, James Madison got that on their first three possession Saturday night.

"Any time you get points to start the game, it kind of sets the tone," said DiNucci, who threw for two touchdowns and ran for another.

The Dukes got a field goal on their first drive and touchdowns on their next two, each coming after forcing the Wildcats to run three plays and punt.

"We got off to such a slow start that the damage was done in the first quarter," Weber State coach Jay Hill said. "You can't get down 17-0 to those guys."

James Madison (14-1) led 24-7 at halftime, added two second-half field goals and let their defense take care of the rest. The Wildcats managed just 256 yards of offense compared to 467 for the Dukes.

"We're not done yet," Dukes cornerback Rashad Robinson said.

Weber State (11-4) saw its playoff run end at Bridgeforth Stadium for the second time in three seasons.

NFL

Texans edge Bucs, win AFC South

By FRED GOODALL
Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — The Houston Texans aren't satisfied with being AFC South champions for the fourth time in five years.

They feel as if they're just getting started, and donned T-shirts Saturday declaring: "The South Is Not Enough."

"This is not the ultimate goal. This is one goal to get us to where we want to go," quarterback Deshaun Watson said after the Texans held off the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 23-20 Saturday to ensure another trip to the playoffs.

"For the ultimate goal, we got our shot," Watson added. "We have our opportunities, so we definitely want to celebrate this and build on this one, then finish up next week and get ready for the big show."

The Texans forced five turnovers, and Bradley Roby returned one of the four interceptions of Jameis Winston 27 yards for an early touchdown — the sixth pick-6 the Bucs quarterback has thrown this season.

Jahleel Adae's interception with 1:27 remaining, ended any realistic chance the Bucs had of fully overcoming Winston's mistakes.

"Anytime you win a division in this league, it's important," coach Bill O'Brien said. "We've done it four out of the last five years. To win the division with one game left is a real feat for our team. It's a resilient team. They work hard, they come to work every day and they try to do what we ask them to do."

The Texans (10-5) won despite not getting an especially sharp performance from Watson, who completed 19 of 32 passes for 184 yards and one interception. The Bucs (7-8) sacked him five times



Jason Benner/AP

The Texans' Jahleel Adae, left, celebrates after he intercepted a pass against the Buccaneers that sealed Houston's victory on Saturday.

and held Houston to one offensive TD on Carlos Hyde's 1-yard run in the second quarter.

The Texans ended Tampa Bay's four-game winning streak and are AFC South champs for the second straight year. They join the Patriots and Chiefs as the only teams with four division titles since 2015.

"It's a good accomplishment... I think it shows some level of consistency," O'Brien said. "Obviously we've got a long way to go, but it's a great accomplishment."

A week after becoming the first player in NFL history to throw for more than 450 yards in consecutive games, Winston was 25 of 48 for 335 yards and one touchdown. He tossed an interception on Tampa Bay's opening drive for the fifth time in seven games, and nearly watched Houston go up 14-0 when Justin Reid intercepted him on the Bucs' next possession.

Instead, the Texans settled for a field goal after a penalty for a blindside block negated what also would have been a 27-yard return for a TD. Hyde's TD, set up by Peyton Barber's fumble, put the Texans up 17-3.

"I can't do it," Winston said of his 11th career game with at least three interceptions, the most in the NFL since he entered the league as the No. 1 overall pick in the 2015 draft. "I have a snap-and-clear mentality, but I just can't (throw interceptions)."

A resilient Winston, playing with an injury-depleted group of receivers, rallied the Bucs with a pair of touchdowns in the last two minutes of the opening half to make it 17-17 on his 8-yard scoring throw to Justin Watson.

"He's a gunslinger. He'll throw a pick, and on the very next play, he'll throw a fade," Reid said of Winston. "It doesn't bother him."

Scoreboard

American Conference									
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA			
Y-New England	10	5	0	.667	306	198			
X-Buffalo	10	6	0	.667	308	246			
N.Y. Jets	9	6	1	.600	247	341			
Miami	3	11	0	.214	241	435			
South									
Y-Houston	10	6	0	.667	364	350			
Tennessee	8	6	0	.571	339	279			
Indianapolis	6	8	6	.429	303	329			
Jacksonville	5	9	0	.357	250	353			
North									
Y-Baltimore	12	2	0	.857	472	257			
Pittsburgh	8	6	0	.571	269	259			
Cleveland	6	8	0	.429	297	328			
Cincinnati	1	13	0	.071	211	359			
West									
Y-Kansas City	10	4	0	.714	394	284			
Oakland	6	8	0	.429	278	286			
Denver	6	8	0	.429	278	286			
L.A. Chargers	5	9	0	.357	299	290			

National Conference									
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA			
Dallas	7	0	0	.500	378	288			
Philadelphia	7	7	0	.500	334	328			
N.Y. Giants	3	11	0	.214	263	382			
Washington	3	11	0	.214	215	347			
South									
Y-New Orleans	1	0	0	.786	378	303			
Tampa Bay	7	8	0	.467	436	421			
Atlanta	2	9	0	.182	293	361			
Carolina	5	9	0	.357	324	390			
North									
X-Green Bay	11	3	0	.786	330	283			
X-Minnesota	10	4	0	.714	378	259			
Chicago	3	10	0	.250	250	373			
Detroit	3	10	1	.250	304	373			
X-San Francisco	12	3	0	.800	452	289			
X-Seattle	11	4	0	.786	371	345			
L.A. Rams	8	7	0	.533	363	340			
Arizona	1	1	0	.321	310	398			

Sunday's games									
Houston 23, Tampa Bay 20									
New England 24, Buffalo 17									
San Francisco 34, L.A. Rams 31									
Monday's games									
N.Y. Giants at Washington									
Cincinnati at Miami									
N.Y. Giants at Tennessee									
Pittsburgh at N.Y. Jets									
Baltimore at Cleveland									
Carolina at Indianapolis									
Jacksonville at Atlanta									
Akron at L.A. Chargers									
Detroit at Denver									
Indianapolis at Seattle									
Dallas at Philadelphia									
Kansas City at Seattle									

Monday's games									
Green Bay at Minnesota									
San Francisco 29, Tampa Bay 20									
Chicago at Minnesota									
Atlanta at Tampa Bay									
Miami at New England									
Atlanta at Tampa Bay									
Green Bay at Detroit									
Washington at Dallas									
Indianapolis at Jacksonville									
Cleveland at Cincinnati									
N.Y. Jets at Buffalo									
Chargers at Kansas City									
New Orleans at Carolina									
Pittsburgh at Baltimore									
Chargers at Kansas City									
San Francisco at Seattle									
Arizona at L.A. Rams									

Packers head to Minnesota in control of division

By DAVE CAMPBELL
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Sure, the Green Bay Packers haven't lined up many style points in this first season under coach Matt LaFleur.

They've been outscored in the second and fourth quarters. Only four of their 11 wins have come by more than one score. Their team rankings in rushing and passing yardage in both offense and defense are all in the bottom half of the league.

Here they are, though, needing only one victory in their final two games to take the division title. What's more, a first-round bye for the playoffs remains well within reach. Whatever the outcome of their visit to Minnesota on Monday night, this rookie year for the inexperienced LaFleur and his staff could hardly be recorded as anything but a job well done.

"This was the goal, to win the NFC North, and this is the game that can do it for us," said LaFleur, the offensive coordinator for

Tennessee last season who turned 40 last month.

From quarterback Aaron Rodgers on down the roster, players have raved about the contribution that the chemistry of this team has made to the stellar win-loss record and late-game resiliency. Beyond that, though, there aren't any secrets to this success for the Packers (11-3).

They have the second-fewest turnovers in the NFL with nine, and their rushing attack spearheaded by Aaron Jones has ably complemented Rodgers in his up-and-down attempt to help his young wide receivers hit their stride. The defense has the third-best interception percentage in the league and the fifth-best red zone rate, allowing fewer than half of opponent possessions inside the 20 to cross the goal line.

There were plenty of questions, both internal and external, about how Rodgers would work with LaFleur but their initial relationship has, by all accounts, been a



**Green Bay Packers (11-3)
at Minnesota Vikings (10-4)**

AFN-Sports
2:15 a.m. Tuesday CET
10:15 a.m. Tuesday JKT

healthy one.

"He allowed for the leadership to kind of naturally come together. He empowered guys that need to be empowered, allowed his coaching staff to do the same, and I think naturally there's been kind of a group within the group that's formed from a leadership standpoint that we all hold ourselves, especially in that group, to a really high standard," Rodgers said. "Because we have to set the tone for the rest of the squad,

and Matt has fostered that ability I think by keeping things very simple."

Though the Vikings (10-4) didn't win the division until their second season under coach Mike Zimmer in 2015, that ode to Rodgers and the power of simplicity would translate across the border in some ways, too. Though Zimmer is a defensive expert, not offense like LaFleur and the majority of their peers across the league, the Vikings have developed a consistent identity under his leadership even as their offense has changed hands and styles multiple times.

"I like this team. I like how they're playing," Zimmer said, adding: "I think we're doing a good job scheming offensively. Defensively we've played a little bit better the last couple of weeks. If we can ever get it to the point where I really feel good about it, we could do some damage."

Making that leap push through the playoffs will be more difficult on the road, of course, which is

where the Vikings will be headed unless they get some improbable help in Detroit on the final day of the regular season.

The last non-division winner to reach the Super Bowl was the Packers nine years ago, and the odds of any Minnesota team winning the NFC North is as if the spitting Lions beat the Packers in addition to Vikings victories in their last two games. They host Chicago on Dec. 29, with the chance to go 8-0 at home.

"I feel like our fans are some of the best fans in the world, so playing at home in that atmosphere, it's going to be a lot of fun," Vikings wide receiver Stefon Diggs said. "I look forward to it."

LaFleur can become the 10th rookie coach in NFL history to win 12-plus games. Jim Caldwell (Indianapolis, 2009) and George Seifert (San Francisco, 1989) are the top two with 14-2 records. Dan Fouts (San Diego, 1973) and Dan Fouts (San Diego, 1973) are the top two with 12-4 records. Dan Fouts (San Diego, 1973) and Dan Fouts (San Diego, 1973) are the top two with 12-4 records.

NFL

Pain: Niners remain in control of playoff destiny

FROM BACK PAGE

with Beathard in college at Iowa and was close to the family.

"Today was absolutely terrible, for me the entire day. It sucked all around. Overall it was just kind of a brutal day. We got that one for C.J. and I'm so happy we were able to do it."

It didn't come easily, as it took Jimmy Garoppolo converting a pair of conversions on third- and 16 to set up Robbie Gould's game-winning 33-yard field goal with no time left to eliminate the defending NFC champion Rams from playoff contention.

Garoppolo made up for a mostly pedestrian game for a mostly pedestrian game for the 49ers (12-3) by delivering two big throws on the final drive after taking his fifth and sixth sacks.

To convert two of those the way he did it was pretty incredible," Garoppolo said.

He found Kendrick Bourne on an 18-yard pass over the middle to convert the first long third down and then hit Emmanuel Sanders behind a blown coverage for 46 yards.

San Francisco had failed on 50 straight third downs when needing at least 16 yards to convert since last doing it in Week 3 in 2017.

"Usually it's such a low percentage that you don't even try on third and 16" coach Kyle Shanahan said. "Usually you just try to survive the down and get half of it."

The Niners then ran down the clock before Gould made the kick that knocked the Rams (8-7) out of the playoffs. Minnesota became the fifth team to clinch a berth in the NFC with Dallas and Philadelphia battling for the final spot.

"It's extremely disappointing," Rams quarterback Jared Goff said. "You never envision something like this when you start the year. It's not even close to the standard we want to hold. It's sickening."

The victory kept the Niners in control in the race for the NFC's top seed and home-field advantage throughout. They still need to win next week at Seattle to win the NFC West, otherwise they will be relegated to wild-card status.

Garoppolo finished 16-for-27 for 248 yards with one touchdown and two interceptions.

Goff connected on a 22-yard TD pass to Cooper Kupp in the third quarter to put the Rams ahead 28-24. The defense had throttled the Niners, holding them to four punts, one interception and only two first downs in the second half before San Francisco took over at the midway through the fourth quarter.

Garoppolo hit Kittle on a 36-yard pass to start the drive and then connected with Ross Dwyer on a 25-yarder that also featured a personal foul on Eric Weddle. Three plays later, Garoppolo scrambled on third down to give Kittle time to work free and then found him in the front of the

end zone for the touchdown that made it 31-28.

Goff responded and drove the Rams to a tying 52-yard field goal with 2:30 to play after Marcell Harris dropped a potential interception for San Francisco.

But the Rams couldn't get another stop and lost.

"Bottom line is you had two third down and I want to say 16s where we had a chance to get those guys off the grass, the way that we had played the whole night," coach Sean McVay said. "I think those two plays are not indicative of the effort that our defense gave and it's unfortunate that they ended that way, because they had put together a really good performance against a tough offense."

The offenses controlled the game early with Goff throwing a 10-yard TD pass to Brandin Cooks on the opening drive and Todd Gurley scoring on two short runs to stake the Rams to a 21-10 lead.

But Raheem Mostert answered Gurley's second score with a TD run of his own. He's the first 49er to have five straight games with a rushing touchdown since Derek Loville had a six-game streak in 1995. The defenses then buckled down starting when Fred Warner intercepted a swing pass from Goff in the closing minute of the first half and returned it 46 yards for a score that put San Francisco up 24-21 at the half.

The Niners defense then held firm after Garoppolo's second interception set up the Rams in prime position to start the second half. But an intentional grounding penalty led to a 52-yard missed field goal by Greg Zuerlein.

49ers 34, Rams 31	
L.A. Rams	7 14 3 3-31
San Francisco	3 21 7 10-34

First Quarter
LAR—Cooks 10 pass from Goff (Zuerlein kick), 11:08.

SF—FG Gould 26, 9:35.

Second Quarter

SF—Gurley 5 run (Zuerlein kick), 14:55.

SF—Samuel 19 run (Gould kick), 12:06.

LAR—Zuerlein 1 run (Zuerlein kick), 6:47.

SF—Mostert 16 run (Gould kick), 2:21.

SF—Warner 46 interception return (Gould kick), 4:26.

Third Quarter

LAR—Kupp 22 pass from Goff (Zuerlein kick), 50:50.

SF—Kittle 6 pass from Garoppolo (Gould kick), 6:06.

Fourth Quarter

SF—Gould 33, 2:30.

SF—FG Gould 32, 0:00.

A—70:103.

	LAR	SF
First downs	29	23
Total Net Yards	248	219
Rushes-yards	24-72	23-119
Passing	123	215
Punt Returns	2	0
Kickoff Returns	1-27	1-81
Interceptions Ret.	1-46	1-46
Comp-Att-Int	16-27-0	16-27-2
SF-Yards Lost	1-3	6-13
Punts	6-44.3	5-43.8
Fumbles-Lost	2-0	2-0
Time of Possession	29:21	32:39
Time of Possession	29:21	32:39

RUSHING—L.A. Rams, Gurley 15-68, Brown 10-53, Coleman 1-22, Woods 2-6, Brown 1 (-minus 1). San Francisco, Mostert 16-72, Zuerlein 1-46.

PASSING—L.A. Rams, Goff 27-46-1, 323.

San Francisco, Garoppolo 16-27-0, 248.

RECEIVING—L.A. Rams, Hightower 9-104, Woods 3-39, Kupp 2-28, Kittle 1-6.

Reynolds 2-32, San Francisco, Kittle 5-73, Samuel 4-31, Sanders 3-51, Bourne 2-29.

MISSED FIELD GOALS—L.A. Rams, Zuerlein 52.



STEVEN SENNE/AP

New England Patriots running back Rex Burkhead breaks loose from an attempted tackle to run for a game-winning 1-yard touchdown during his team's 24-17 defeat of the Buffalo Bills on Saturday.

Pats down Bills, retain the crown in AFC East

By JIMMY GOLEN
Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Tom Brady appeared for his postgame media session with an ice pack on his right elbow. Bill Belichick was sporting a brand new AFC East championship hat.

The New England Patriots had things a little tougher this year, but they came out on top yet again.

Brady passed for 271 yards and a touchdown, sneaked for a third-down conversion to set up another score and threw a downfield block on another scoring drive to help the defending Super Bowl champions beat Buffalo 24-17 on Saturday and clinch their 11th straight AFC East title.

"I'm pretty poor at just about everything other than throwing the ball," said Brady, who is 42 and nursing a right elbow injury but still absorbed a crunching tackle after a 3-yard scramble that was followed one play later by Rex Burkhead's go-ahead touchdown.

"He's the heartbeat of this football team," special teams captain Matthew Slater said. "We've been one of the most fortunate organizations the last 20 years to have that guy at the helm. He proved it again tonight."

With the Bills visiting for a rare late-season matchup while the division was still at stake, Burkhead rebounded from an opening-drive fumble to catch four passes for 77 yards and run for 20 more, including a 1-yard touchdown with 5:11 left to give New England the lead. Brady found Julian Edelman, who was in the concussion

protocol earlier in the second half, on the 2-point conversion to make it 24-17.

Both teams had already clinched playoff berths; the Patriots (12-3) remain in contention for a first-round bye or even the No. 1 seed in the AFC.

"You couldn't ask for a better situation, playing for an AFC division title in December with two games left to give yourself a chance," said Bills quarterback Josh Allen, who drove Buffalo to the New England 8 in the final minutes but couldn't deliver a touchdown. "I'm super thankful for this experience and what we were able to do here. At the same time, we came here to win a football game, and we didn't get that done."

Allen completed 13 of 26 passes for 208 yards and ran for 43, including a first down on fourth-and-1 from the Patriots 30 with about three minutes left. With a first-and-goal from the 8, he was stopped on a run, overthrew Dawson Knox in the end zone and then was sacked by Adam Butler.

Facing fourth-and-goal from the 15 with just over one minute left, he was forced out of the pocket and had to throw the ball up for grabs in the end zone, where it was knocked down by J.C. Jackson.

"It was a playoff-type game," Bills running back Frank Gore said. "We played against a good team and it came down to us on the 10-yard line."

Sony Michel ran for 96 yards for the Patriots, who would earn a first-round bye if Kansas City loses or ties one of its remaining two games.

Cole Beasley caught seven passes for 108 yards, and John Brown had a 53-yard touchdown reception for the Bills (10-5), who have qualified for the postseason for the second time since 1999. They have not won a playoff game since 1995, following their last division title, when Marv Levy's team beat Don Shula's Miami Dolphins in the wild-card round.

Brady improved to 32-3 against the Bills, who haven't beaten the Patriots in six games under coach Sean McDermott.

Patriots 24, Bills 17	
Buffalo	3 7 7 0-17
New England	3 3 11-24

First Quarter

Buf—FG Hauschka 35, 9:16.

NE—LaCosse 8 pass from Brady (Folk kick), 1:50.

Second Quarter

NE—FG Folk 38, 5:04.

Buf—Dawkins 1 pass from Allen (Hauschka kick), 7:25.

Third Quarter

NE—FG Folk 39, 9:24.

Buf—Brown 53 pass from Allen (Hauschka kick), 7:25.

Fourth Quarter

NE—FG Folk 20, 10:45.

NE—Burkhead 1 run (Edelman pass from Brady), 5:06.

A—65:578.

	Buf	NE
First downs	20	21
Total Net Yards	288	414
Rushes-yards	23-92	35-143
Passing	176	271
Punt Returns	1-17	3-17
Interceptions Ret.	1-7	3-75
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	13-26-0	26-33-0
Sack-Yards Lost	4-22	0-0
Punts	6-44.3	2-46.5
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-1
Penalties-Yards	7-46	3-30
Time of Possession	25:33	38:51

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—L.A. Rams, Singletary 15-46, Allen 7-43, Brown 1-3. New England, Michel 21-96, Burkhead 5-20, Harry 2-18, White 2-1.

PASSING—L.A. Rams, Allen 13-26-0, 208.

New England, Brady 26-33-0.

RECEIVING—Buffalo, Beasley 7-108, McKenzie 2-11, Brown 1-53, Knox 1-33.

Edelman 1-12, Dawkins 1-1. New England, Edelman 5-72, Burkhead 4-77, White 4-24, Meyers 3-25, Sans 3-24, Watson 3-15, Harry 2-21, LaCosse 1-8, Michel 1-5.

MISSED FIELD GOALS—None.

SPORTS

**Not-so-good to be king**

Kansas becomes fifth top-ranked team to fall » **College hoops, Page 19**

NFL

Persevering through pain

Grieving Niners eliminate Rams from playoff race

By Josh Dubow
Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — An exhilarating, game-winning drive that put the San Francisco 49ers in position to seize the top seed in the playoffs next week would normally be reason to celebrate.

The mood for the 49ers was far from joyous following a 34-31 victory Saturday night over the Los Angeles Rams because teammates were more concerned about the well-being of third-string quarterback C.J. Beathard, whose younger brother Clayton was fatally stabbed earlier in the day at a Nashville bar.

"It was definitely the toughest game of my career," said an emotional George Kittle, who played

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Inside:

- Texans keep focus on 'ultimate goal', Page 22
- Patriots win division crown again, Page 23

The 49ers' George Kittle shouts into a phone while celebrating San Francisco's 34-31 win over the Los Angeles Rams on Saturday.

Tony Avelar / AP

Washington tops No. 18 Boise State » College football, Page 21

